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**THE LIFE
BEYOND THE GRAVE**



LONDON: PRINTED BY
SPOTTISWOODE AND CO., NEW-STREET SQUARE
AND PARLIAMENT STREET

THE
LIFE BEYOND THE GRAVE

A SERIES OF MEDITATIONS UPON
THE RESURRECTION AND ASCENSION
OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

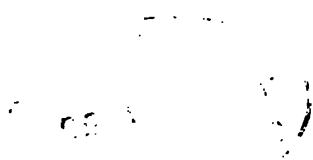
*'Thy dead men shall live, together with My dead
Body shall they arise'—Is. xxvi 19*

BY THE
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LONDON
J. T. HAYES, 17 HENRIETTA STREET, COVENT GARDEN
NEW YORK
JAMES POTT & CO., 12 ASTOR PLACE
1885

1101. f. 19.





PREFACE.

THE resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ is a truth of the utmost importance for us to dwell upon. It is not merely one of a great series of truths which claim our attention by their own dignity. It is the foundation of all the practical teaching of the Christian Church, for everything that we have to do must be done in the power of Christ's resurrection. This is an equivalent phrase to the power of the Holy Ghost, for the Holy Ghost by whom Christ was raised operates upon us through His risen Body. Itself implies the Incarnation and the redemption on Calvary, but they would be inefficacious without this further development of the human nature of Christ. The grain of corn would remain alone if it had not died. Yea, rather if it had not risen again. The communication of the Divine life for our sanctification until we be glorified according to God's will is the result of the elevation of Christ personally in a Body of glory to



which our bodies of humiliation must be conformed by our reception of this glorified substance into ourselves as a renewing principle of vitality.

Our conception of our relation to Christ depends therefore upon our having, if not a true conception of His risen Body, for it may be said that that is impossible, at least a conception of some of its characteristics and powers, so as to be free from those misconceptions which arise from merely translating earthly thoughts into a new sphere and perpetuating earthly laws which have ceased to bind.

Let us notice at the outset, although the remark need not go for more than it is worth, that the exaltation of our Lord's Body to a higher mode of action than belonged to Him in His state of humiliation, is thoroughly in accordance with the modern scientific notion of development. The previous stages of development by which some suppose that our body attained its present form may well (if admitted) be supposed to act as a prelude to this final transformation of man's body by the resurrection of Christ as a fresh germinal principle of life. The whole system of development gains indeed a purpose and a finality if it culminate in the exaltation of Christ to the throne of creation, whereas it is aimless if the highest result be nothing more than our present human form of life upon the earth. There is no reason why this should have been attained. There is no reason

why development should cease at this particular stage.

As a matter of fact the Church has always believed in a development of the human organism in the future, although she maintains that man is in himself a distinctly fresh starting point in the creation of God, and whatever developments may have produced the various races of beasts, of fishes, and of birds, she maintains that the flesh of man is in some manner distinct from them. The earth and the waters brought them forth. God made man by His own interposition from above, and He made the first man in order that He, the Lord from Heaven, might become the second man, and raise the nature thus formed to the throne of eternal glory.

The risen Body of Christ is not merely a pattern to which we must be morally conformed. It is an agent of spiritual power by whose operation the conformity is to be attained. Hence our conception of the risen Body of Christ will affect all our moral teaching. Our mode of approaching Him and recognising His Presence in the holy Eucharist ; our conception of what the Church of Christ should be, and of what is the importance of Church unity ; our regard one to another, and our appreciation of Church government ; our thoughts respecting the faithful departed and our missionary enterprise, our belief in the spiritual efficacy of sacraments, and in the

eternal character of the loss which those incur who are cut off from Christ by sin—all these and many other matters of theological importance depend for their answer upon our having a right apprehension of ‘Jesus and the Resurrection.’

One great purpose of our Lord’s tarrying upon earth for the forty days seems have been just this, that He might give to the Apostles an experimental acquaintance with His risen life. In the very nature of things it was impossible that they could understand what that risen life was. We do not even understand what life in this world is. We only know some of its phenomena. Much less can we understand that life of which we have as yet had no personal experience. One who had never lived out of Lapland could form no idea of what existence would be amidst the surroundings of a tropical climate. The child can form no idea of what will be the interests of matured life. Much less can we in this world form any idea of what the life of glory shall be hereafter.

But our Lord gave His Apostles some practical acquaintance with this higher life, and he eliminated from their minds various erroneous conceptions which the course of this world would necessarily have engendered within them. Each of His appearances seems to have been intended to teach some practical truth respecting the coming life, which they by the

Holy Ghost were to communicate from Himself as the Head to all those who should be called by Him from all the nations of the world to the obedience of faith.

It is to be feared that in spite of this we are apt to think of our ascended Lord very commonly as if He were in all points just what He was upon the earth, only surrounded by conditions of glory which were wanting here. We must remember that the glory wherein He dwells is not an atmosphere into which He was translated, but a glory inherent within Himself which manifests itself through His Humanity, and that His Humanity has undergone such changes as to qualify it to be the instrument of such manifestation. We may recur to the illustration which our Lord Himself gave, and use it with equal truth for a somewhat different purpose from that for which He cited it. The grain of corn when it has died does not merely attract round itself the substances which may be capable of assimilation, so that both itself and they may shine as with a glow-worm light, remaining otherwise what the seed was when it was put into the ground. The true body which that seed contained was a power which death has developed and which exists in quite a different form as the blade, the ear, the full corn in the ear. Even more different is the oak tree from the acorn, yet the acorn contained within itself the force which according to a bodily law should become fully de-

veloped into the mighty forest tree. The mustard seed of our Lord's parable is given by Himself as an illustration of the kingdom of heaven contained within the smallness of His personal appearance upon earth, which nevertheless was to become the greatest among herbs. The insect world supplies wonderful illustrations of the resurrection life. Yet it is to be feared that we rather think of Christ and His saints as if they were separate grains of corn shining and capable of flight, chrysalises with wings, than as we are taught to consider them, possessing in the resurrection a life and power wholly different from what was here, and a unity infinitely greater than we can in this world suppose to be consistent with the remaining individuality which nevertheless they possess.

Our Lord did not wish to teach what we are not capable of understanding, but He did wish to preclude such false conceptions as would hinder our profitable use of the powers of the resurrection which He meant to give. It is to be feared that we have sadly cast aside His teaching. The phenomena of His risen life in His appearances are too often considered as if they were in themselves miraculous, instead of being acknowledged as proper and natural to the condition which His Body had then assumed.

In the following Meditations there will be no attempt to form any theory as to the nature of the risen

ly, but merely to observe such characteristics as implied by the narrative. If we accustom ourselves to live with our risen Lord we shall not need speculate upon what we cannot now understand, ; we shall learn to avoid certain gross ideas which r the enjoyment of the fruits of His resurrection l ascension. The changes which we find belong ; to the Forty Days suggest expansions of energy ich belong to His ascension, but probably they ggest as much as we can understand. We may well iever that the higher activity is altogether beyond : understanding, being outside of what we know as e and space. It is enough therefore for us to follow iently as far as God may lead, and leave what is yond, content to receive from the Divine glory h isolated statements of truth as God may give, hout presuming to trace them out in their com- te harmonies.

Such isolated truths respecting forms of existence ich are beyond the power of human reason to alyse, may be compared to points of curvature ich may be determined by a mathematical equa- m, although the equation does not suffice to trace t the curvature in the plane through which the rve travels towards that point.

The habit of meditating upon our Lord's risen dy will enable us to receive statements respecting is Body which would otherwise appear impossible.

In fact probably many persons are opposed to certain truths, such as the truth of the real Presence in the holy Eucharist, because the statements are grotesque when they are made with reference to a Body existing under the conditions under which our bodies live upon the earth, and what is spoken in view of one set of conditions becomes a matter of cavil as being understood of conditions altogether different.

The habit of dwelling upon our Lord's glorified state is assuredly of very great importance. Our fellowship with His glory will stimulate us with a holy joy if in any way we are permitted to suffer for His Name's sake. Thus the early martyrs triumphed.

It is feared that in the present day we dwell disproportionately on the thoughts of our Lord's suffering, so that the contemplation of His glory is neglected. The joy of His Humanity and His personal human interest in us as His members are to be cherished by us as earnestly as the sense of the anguish with which He bore our sins upon the tree. We must remember that the joy is proportionate to the suffering and is an abundant reward. He did not die merely to satisfy an abstract theory of justice, but with the hope of the joy that was set before Him ; and in the great day of His espousals at the marriage supper of the Lamb, He shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied.

ness that we can have. A knowledge of
risen life in itself will be the greatest help
e use of His grace, that we ourselves may
se who are risen from the dead to the glory
y Name.

following Meditations it will often be found
are variations in the quoting of Holy Scrip-
the text of the Authorised Version. This,
generally happens, and especially in the Old
:, in order to bring out the meaning of a
y the concordance, as the same word is
d in the original when different words are
e English, and *vice versâ*.

expressions in the Colloquies have especial
to those who are living under Religious
ey will not, any more than those which
he Priesthood, occasion any difficulty for
ons who may use the book. The reader's
eadily pass over any sentence in which

risen with Himself, to set our affections more constantly upon things above, where He sitteth at the Right Hand of God. So looking upward we shall watch for His appearing, and pray more earnestly Thy Kingdom come. 'Even so, come, Lord Jesus.'

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THE LIFE BEYOND THE GRAVE.

MEDITATION I.

The Blessed Virgin at the House of St. John.

And from that hour the disciple took her unto his own home.—St. John xix. 27.

1. FAITH.

IN preparing to meditate upon our Lord's resurrection, we cannot do better than place ourselves alongside of the Blessed Mother who had left the Cross under the guardianship of the beloved disciple, and was calmly waiting for the fulfilment of those great mysteries of joy in which the sorrows of Calvary were to develope. Apparently she had come tranquilly away before the darkness gathered round the Crucified, understanding the words which were addressed to her as words of farewell, and recognising calm and trustful obedience as the truest expression of love.

The disciples generally had failed to understand the clear predictions of the Cross and the resurrection which Jesus had so often uttered. We may well believe that Mary, having pondered these words in

her heart, was more alive than any other to their true meaning. She knew that Jesus meant what He said, and she took His words in their literal import. The sorrow was accomplished to the letter. Surely she did not doubt that the fulfilment of the joy would be equally complete. 'The third day He shall rise again.'

True, she may not have grasped the glorious power of the resurrection into which He would enter, and yet the farewell upon the Cross implied that in His new life He would no longer be able to fulfil towards her those duties which belonged to natural sonship. She cannot have supposed that death would absorb Him. She must therefore have seen that when the disciple was charged to take His place, it was intimated that Jesus Himself, wherever he might be, would be elevated above the personal ministrations of filial affection. She did not doubt His love because she believed His word, but she probably recognised the high appeal to the Messianic humanity which is contained in the Psalter, 'Forget also thine own people and thy father's house.' (Ps. xlv. 10)

It is evident from the Gospel narrative, and its silence, that her demeanour during the time of sorrow was altogether different from that which meets us constantly in sacred art. She left the Body of her Son to the care of others, and waited patiently in the house of St. John. She left it, not in negligence but in faith. Her lips were sealed by the very greatness of her expectations. She pondered but she could not explain. Others might

THE BLESSED VIRGIN AT THE HOUSE OF ST. JOHN. 3

embalm. She knew that the Holy One could not see corruption. She might well leave human friendship to provide for human necessity. She was rather looking for God to fulfil His own word towards His Beloved One, not knowing what God would do, but sure that all would be well. The time was fixed. The issue of the Divine operation would transcend her highest powers of thought. The outward overthrow would surely be the precursor of a Divine victory. As at Cana she had felt confident that He would work a miracle although she seemed to be rebuffed by his words, so now she looked forward to a deliverance, although death seemed to be for a time triumphant.

O Jesu, never let me doubt the truth of Thy words, although outwardly they may seem to have failed. Thou art the Lord of life, and Thy words live beyond the grave, and show their power by the very difficulties which try our faith.

My son, thou must be content to see all my promises die away if thou wouldst know them according to the power of My resurrection.

Yea, Lord, even so. O let me experience the triumph of Thy grace, perfecting my faith that so I may be worthy to behold the triumph of Thy glory accomplishing my deliverance.

'He that believeth shall not make haste.' Wait therefore patiently upon me in every time of trouble, and in due time thou shalt experience the all-sufficiency of My protection. Limit not the power of My words by the suc-

cesses which thine own heart can imagine to be natural as the development of My purposes. Come with Me through the valley of the shadow of death, that so thou mayest behold the glory of the endless life. My death I triumphed over death. My death thou must escape from death. So shall thou attain to know the power of the true, the endless life, which here thou canst not know. Believe in Me, and thou shalt live with Me.

O Lord, whatever happens in the world, I will rest confidently in Thee. Earthly things fail; Thy word is sure for ever. O give me such true and lively faith that I may be safe in the joyousness of Thy Divine security while I wait for the manifestation of Thy love in its own unsullied eternity of everliving power.

2. HOPE.

The Blessed Virgin could not think of her Son otherwise than with a lively hope. She did not merely believe in Him as a supernatural Being. She knew that the filial love wherein she rejoiced was intensified, not destroyed, by the higher nature of His mysterious life. The separation which His public ministry had involved, however great it may have been, had not resulted from any loss of the sweet and holy sympathies of that perfect Childhood over which she had watched. The farewell which He had taken of her as He hung upon the Cross could not imply that that love had failed. Still she looked for the Divine love to act through that loving Heart.

THE BLESSED VIRGIN AT THE HOUSE OF ST. JOHN. 5

had passed on—He had gone away from her—
had not ceased to love. Earthly life He might
render, but love is the life of God from which He
could not sunder Himself.

Thus would her consciousness of His changeless
be to her a foundation of hope. In whatever
free she was enabled to realise the union of her
child with God, in that same degree she knew that
every development of His Being was a development
of love; no vague inactive love, but personal and
dear as the Child-love had been; yes, and hence-
forth shining with the Majesty of God.

Whatever trouble there might be, she knew that
the Lord had come into this wilderness with the pur-
pose of undergoing it, and that all was leading on to
the glorious consummation. The good purpose of
God could not fail.

How continually do we murmur at God's arrange-
ments, as if God did not give us all things for our
best good. If we will be loyal in our acceptance
of God, we may be sure that He cannot fail to give
all that will be for our good. We do not wish to
forego the fulness of satisfaction now, for it were sin-
nish to hope to wish to have our heavenly joy ante-
ceded. Rather we rejoice in the sufferings of the
present time, for we know that they are not without
good result. We must not regard them as a phase
of trouble to be borne with resignation, in the confi-
dence of an escape to be effected by and by. That
would be an act of faith, but not of hope. We need
recognise the goodness of all the troubles which we
are to bear, because they are working out for us

results of blessing which could not be attained in any other way. The reward shall be proportionate to the suffering, if the suffering be faithfully borne. The reward shall be proportionate, but it shall be infinitely greater.

Hope therefore finds a calm joy even in the midst of the greatest sufferings, and even proportionately to their greatness. If the Blessed Virgin withdrew from the sight of the Cross where the present suffering must have been the occasion of harrowing anguish to her tender heart, she surely looked forward to the joy that was set before Him, in the strength of contemplation akin to that where-with He Himself was bearing the shame. She knew that He was thus to attain to the throne of His father David, with all the glory of the Son of the Highest (Luke i. 32). Those who were round about her felt their hopes overthrown, for their hopes were hopes of an earthly victory to be achieved upon this side the grave; but if Abraham offered up Isaac, knowing that he should receive him back from death, though not knowing how, much more may we be assured did blessed Mary look forward to receive Jesus back again from death, not as Isaac in a figure, but in reality and truth, and not only to a transitory life of sorrow, but to a true, an abiding life of glory. Her calm soul may even have uttered anew the song of hope which she had spoken of old in the hearing of Elizabeth. Now He was indeed putting down the mighty from their seat, and though the arm of the Lord was not revealed to the heart of Israel, yet she knew that the God of Israel was showing strength

THE BLESSED VIRGIN AT THE HOUSE OF ST. JOHN. 7

with His arm, exalting her lowly Offspring in union with the Divine Nature which was His from everlasting.

Of her hopes she could not speak to those who were around. None could understand her if she did. They had not accepted the prophecies of Jesus: much less could they now find comfort in her encouragements. They would seem to them as the ravings of maternal disappointment and despair. Silently, therefore, she abode in secret hope of the glory. For this purpose did He come into the world. The end was near.

O Jesu, grant me thus in every time of trial to remember Thy promises; to ponder them, to cherish them, to find in them my stay, my joy, a hope that maketh not ashamed.

Truly, My son, if thou wouldst have thy reward in Me, thou must not seek it in this present world. Thou must die in order that thou mayest enter into it, and in proportion to thy suffering now shall be the recompence of the reward hereafter.

O Lord Jesu, how can I bear to be with Thee upon the Cross?

My grace is sufficient for thee. Fear not anything which I call thee to endure for My name's sake. Hope in Me, and thou shalt triumph over all.

O Blessed Jesu, truly my hope is ever in Thee, and when I remember the Cross whereby Thou didst pass to Thy joyful resurrection, I learn to accept

every form of outward discomfiture as the sure prelude to the deliverance wherein Thou wilt set Thy saints free for ever.

8. LOVE.

Earthly love would have expostulated as Peter did, saying, 'This be far from Thee, Lord.' The Blessed Virgin loved her Son with a better love. She would not draw Him back now from that which was the very end for which He came into the world, although assuredly she could have no knowledge what that really signified.

Love must be trustful: otherwise it cannot be true. Mary could not love Jesus as she loved Him, and doubt of His wisdom and triumph. She who in her childhood had faith to recognise the law of the Incarnation and the Virginal Birth would surely now recognise the law of redemption. Her love would not hold Him back from greatness. The greatness of His self-oblation was the very source and stay of her love. She knew that as He gave Himself to die, it was by death to manifest His love. If faith accepted the trial, and hope exulted even in the midst of the sorrow, love, even in spite of outward absence, could embrace the Sufferer with thankful homage, as she had spoken of old, 'My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour, for He that is mighty hath done to me great things, and holy is His name.'

Our Lord had said to the Apostles, 'If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I go unto the Father.'

THE BLESSED VIRGIN AT THE HOUSE OF ST. JOHN. 9

It can scarcely be that the Virgin failed to render such love. Though He was going away from her, and she may as yet have had no knowledge of the coming Comforter whose presence would be the blessed equivalent and more effectual substitute for that which was withdrawn, nevertheless she could repose in His love. She could be no loser, since His love would never suffer her to lose.

Silently, in faith, in hope, in love, she waited for the issue of events. Events would show what Jesus was doing. For Him she had borne shame when He was born into this world. He now bears shame for her, that she may have admission into another and a better world. Love would show itself stronger than death, not only by strengthening Jesus to die, but by making Him to become in future ages the joyous portion of all those who looked to Him. Death could not separate from Him. In the endurance of death would the true love of God's people be manifested, both Christ's to them, and theirs to Christ.

Love could anticipate, though it could not decipher the mysteries of the Cross, and a blessed life it ever must be to believe, to hope, to love.

If we would really share the joy of the resurrection, we must accept it as a true solace for all times of suffering. As we are Christ's members we must own the power of His resurrection working within us while we are made conformable to His death. As suffering and death are the porch through which we pass to joy, we must find the power of love strengthening us in all suffering to feel the sympathy of His

presence, His arm stretched out to carry us safely to the end. That which has not shared the Cross cannot share the resurrection. The resurrection strengthens us with sympathetic love to bear the Cross. The risen Lord sympathises with us in our sorrow. We in our sorrow find ourselves transported out of all unworthy self-contemplation. Love forgets self. Love sees Jesus in His glory. Love feels in spite of every outward pain the glory and the joy of the Beloved.

O Jesu, teach me so to love Thee, that I may indeed rejoice in the glory of Thy risen life.

My son, already have I given to thee that risen life, that thou abiding with Me therein mayest never die. Whatever suffering thou hast to bear shall only show this life to be all-sufficient, for thou shalt find thereby the power of God.

Lord Jesu, I look to Thee and see that Thou art risen, but still my dull nature fails to feel that risen power within itself.

O My son, look to Me. Behold Me at the right hand of the Father. As thou beholdest Me in that glory, surely all thought of earthly things must pass away from thee, whether they be sweet or bitter. Look to Me, for I have given thee eyes wherewith to behold Me, and a heart whereby to know the fellowship of My love. Behold Me loving thee, and in that love thou shalt die to every other thought. Bitter is death if the heart be enchained to earth: but

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sweet it is to die in the rapturous love of My redemption.

O Jesu, thus to die is indeed to live for ever. I would not wait for earthly life to close ere I attain this joyous death, dying through love. Now do I desire in this love to become dead to all external accidents, and live as the newborn child of Thy resurrection.

Yea, My son, this life is thy true portion, if by faith and hope and love thou wilt abide in Me. I shield thee not from suffering and shame, for I bore the Cross for thee, but out of every suffering I will deliver thee, and give thee victory over all.

Even so, Lord. I refuse nothing. Yea, Thy Cross shall be my joy. In the bright power of Thy resurrection, the rulers of darkness shall have no power to harm.

MEDITATION II.

The Women preparing to Embalm.

And Mary Magdalene was there, and the other Mary, sitting over against the sepulchre.—St. Matt. xxvii. 81.

Now late on the sabbath day, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre.—St. Matt. xxviii. 1.

And Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Jesus beheld where he was laid.—St. Mark xv. 47.

And when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, bought spices, that they might come and anoint him.—St. Mark xvi. 1.

And the women, which had come with him out of Galilee, followed after, and beheld the tomb, and how his body was laid. And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments.

And on the sabbath they rested according to the commandment.—St. Luke xxiii. 55, 56.

1. REVERENT WATCHFULNESS.

WHILE the Blessed Virgin had gone to the house of St. John, Joseph of Arimathæa and Nicodemus performed for our Lord, in a hasty manner, some hasty rites of temporary burial. The tomb was a new one, constructed by Joseph in a garden close to Calvary for the purpose of his own interment. However, we have not now to consider the burial in itself, but only as preparatory to the resurrection. Mary Magdalene and Mary the wife of Alphæus or Clopas sat near at hand watching. There was with them a number of other women who followed the body from the Cross to the sepulchre, but when the last sad service was over the other women went away into

the city, hurrying off to buy spices and ointments before the Sabbath began.

The two Maries remained behind. They could not tear themselves away from the sad spot. There was another whom we should have expected to find along with them, but she is not mentioned. This is Salome. We may observe here a great incidental testimony to the truth of the narrative. There need be no doubt that Salome had gone home from the Cross in attendance upon the Blessed Virgin, who was brought by her son, the beloved disciple, to be henceforth an inmate. Salome would naturally be wanted at home to receive and wait upon the new guest.

Meanwhile the two Maries sat watching with affectionate interest. It is difficult for us altogether to divest ourselves of the anticipation of the resurrection, and to enter into the feelings of those two women absorbed in grateful sorrow. Mary Magdalene had already anointed that precious Body, the head and the feet, with the contents of the alabaster box, poured out apparently in expectation that when He should be put to death, there would be no opportunity of such attention. But now the Crucifixion of which He spoke is over, and yet they are permitted to show Him the attention which love demands. She had bathed His feet with tears, and now her tears are her offering. She cannot hurry away with the other women from Galilee to buy the lifeless apparatus of funereal regard. Her tears flow on. She watches near. Deep sorrow and strange mystery hold her spellbound. We might have

imagined, perhaps, that she would have risen to the bright promise which His words contained, that in three days He would rise again. But we must remember how entirely such an event transcends all natural expectation and belief. The Blessed Virgin might have such hope. No one else in all the company seems to have had a glimpse of it. Men had been called back to life by Jesus, but no man had yet come back from the grave by his own power. The greatest of the worthies of the olden times had avowedly gone down into silence, and however near to God in life, were prisoners in the grave when dead. The possibility of resurrection implied a condition of the departed soul altogether different from that of the Patriarchal dispensation. They had not received the promises. To be thus alive though dead were indeed to be as a sovereign Lord, fulfilling all the promises. None could thus return in virtue of his own unforfeited life, unless besides the human life which was lost he had the Divine life in such a manner as to be inalienable.

They watched with reverence while they sorrowed. So must we also learn, in all times of sadness, to watch and remain near to Jesus. We may not dare, perhaps, to hope that things will change, but we must not let our hearts be changed nor drawn away from Him. That which is dead in nature should yet live in reverent love before our hearts. We may not wake to any hope of recovery, but our sorrow on occasions of much sacredness will abide calmly in mysterious contemplation, preferring this to the stirring activity of conventional but fruitless effort.

That riveted attention is itself, however, unconsciously allied to hope. The buried body seems to have a life while we watch beside it. The Maries did not know that this attractive fascinating power should so soon become a manifest reality. He whom they watched would live.

So shall it be with His Church. We may in various ways be called to sit and watch when, to the human heart, all speaks of nothing but despair. Yet is there a Divine life, and we must be held not spellbound in unintelligent fascination, but watchfully expectant in the assurance of holy hope.

O Jesu, surely Thou wouldst have us wait on Thee in every trial of desolation, convinced that every desolation of all outward hope must yet fail to destroy the reality of Divine life which belongs to all the dispensations of Thy grace.

Yes, My son, I suffer outward things to perish before thine eyes in order that thou mayest be proved whether thou believest in the continuing vitality of resurrection-power whereby I am able to restore all things to My Church, and will restore even as all was at the first.

Jesu, no power of death shall shake my confidence in Thee. When all things seem to die, and the triumph of the Evil One to be complete, then I know it is that the resurrection is near, and Thou wilt vindicate Thy truth in glorious victory.

2. OBEDIENCE TO DIVINE COMMAND.

The women from Galilee hasted to buy the spices, but as the Maries were tied to the sepulchre by a bond of affection, so these women also were tied by another bond, the bond of duty. However great might be their zeal, they could not transgress the command of God. Having hasted to fulfil the desires of natural piety towards the dead, they rested the seventh day according to the Commandment.

If we would have our share in the resurrection of Christ, we must be in like manner true to all that God has enjoined. We are not to think that zeal will be accepted because it is active and well-intentioned, unless it be according to God's revealed will. That will may often inconvenience us and hinder our performing what seems to be of importance for the moment. This, however, is the very test of reality. We have to give up for God what our natural heart desires. Not until we have done so are we fit to receive from Him greater and supernatural gifts. All our conduct must be regulated by His controlling will.

If we will accept the limitations of God's law, we may be sure that He will make our work expand in proportions far beyond what we can think of.

In truth, all that belongs to Christ meets our view in this world only as it were on the side of death. Death shrouds everything in this world, so that we cannot see the heavenly realities. We seem to be watching beside a sepulchre. It seems to us

as if the supernatural life of the Body of Christ were no more. What is the Christendom of this present day as compared with the Church of the Apostolic age? We must watch like the Maries, and prepare spices like the other women, but with complete submission to God's will. We have all the while to be looking for the manifestation of Jesus Christ rising from the dead. It is the solace of our waiting time to serve Him, but the service claimed for Him brings Him near to us. If we were more diligent in the work of love we should be more watchful for His appearing.

We know that great events are in store for the Church. O that we may be found ready when the day breaks! Nothing can avail for that day which oversteps the limits assigned by God to the conduct of every one of us. The interior virtues aroused by external difficulty are as full of value before the Lord our God as the periods of greatest and easiest triumph. But whether the manifestation of Christ be hastened or delayed, we may be sure that it will come. We are not to be negligent in our acts of care under the notion that they may be unnecessary. We are not to do anything inconsistent with God's commands under the idea of immediate urgency. We must wait upon Him in childlike obedience. So shall we be called to have our part in witnessing His glorious manifestation.

Their obedience to the great command of Sabbath rest, and their promptness in returning to the tomb in the early light of the following day, brought the women to the spot so as to see the angels and announce the resurrection to the disciples. We

may see in this how God's blessing rested upon their continued activity and submission. How little do we calculate upon the overruling Providence of God, Who makes things which shall be for our good happen just at the moment when we shall be able to profit by them. But then we, on our part, must find ourselves in the proper position by having faithfully co-operated with God's purpose. If we have not been true to God's commands, we shall not find ourselves in our proper position when the time comes. Thus through sin do we constantly fail of opportunities which God provides for those who walk in obedience, coming too soon or else too late.

O Jesu, quicken my heart with great desires, but keep me evermore humble with patient recollectedness.

Rest in obedience, My son, whether I call thee to activity or to stillness. If thou fulfil My bidding I will be with thee, but if thou transgress My appointment thou wilt forfeit My promises.

Help me to know Thy will, Thou loving Lord.

Do that which thou knowest, and thou shalt find all thou needest.

Thou, O Blessed Jesu, art my wisdom. In following Thee I shall be safe. Whether I see Thee or no, Thou seest me, and I know Thou wilt not suffer me to lack anything that is good.

3. ASSIDUITY.

The two Maries had rested during the Sabbath like the other women, but now a new evening has arrived, in Jewish reckoning, the dawn of the first day. They go in that evening twilight to accomplish the work of reverence for the dead Body of Christ. At the very outset they call to see the sepulchre, and apparently went thence to fetch Salome from the house of St. John, that she might join with them in procuring the necessary spices and ointments, so that the funeral might be properly completed. We have seen what separated Salome from the others. The Sabbath being over, her own duties as house-mother towards the little family would be at an end for the moment. Thus she was able to go with her friends and purchase the necessaries in the city.

The visit of the Maries to the sepulchre upon their way to Salome's house is quite a natural effort of affection. They may have gone forth before the close of the Sabbath so as to reach Salome as soon as the appointed time of rest would be over, that they might set out at once and purchase the spices. They would thus be at the sepulchre before the guards had taken their station. The sacred spot would be in all its sublime solitude.

Let us think of these visitors and the great stone still remaining against the mouth of the sepulchre. Let us consider the mystery of the Body which still lay dead behind that stone, and of the Soul of Jesus proclaiming to the faithful departed the deliverance

which He had accomplished for them. Many a grave had been opened by the earthquake at the moment of Christ's death. Yet was that opening of the grave only symbolic of a greater. The opened graves told men on earth of the great victory. They need not yawn in order to loose their occupants. When Jesus rose no need was there that any stones should be rolled away for Him and His to leave the prison-house. He could raise their bodies with Himself in spiritual power.

We see the two women standing by the stone. Let us also contemplate by faith the unseen multitudes of blessed ones, the souls which feast upon the proclamation of grace and truth from the Word of God. He has come to show mercy to the fathers, and gather them around Himself that they may follow Him in the resurrection and live according to God in the Spirit.

The night came on. The Paschal moon shone supreme over the landscape. The white pinnacles of the Temple in mysterious majesty made the earthly Jerusalem look in the moonlight as if Heaven had come down to earth. Night was at hand and darkness: but the interior of that sepulchre, where no light of sun nor of moon could enter, shone with a brightness which had been unknown till now. Here is the metropolis of the Heavenly Jerusalem, the glorious city which needs no sun by day nor moon, for there is no night. To them that sat in darkness, fearing nevertheless the name of the Lord, and hoping as they feared, the Sun of Righteousness has already begun to arise, and soon shall they go

forth from their bondage and follow Him in the everlasting light.

How little could those two visitors anticipate the glory which was so near to them. Their hearts clung to the mystery, although their understandings could not fathom its marvels. Love bound them to Jesus with a truth beyond what their faith would have ventured to acknowledge. Their lips would have spoken as if their Lord were dead. Love said within their hearts, He lives.

So is it with us. Words and even thoughts fall short of Divine truth. In love we must be bound to that which as yet we cannot know. So shall we find that even whilst seeming to minister at the grave, we are joined with the blessed in the reality of a triumphant life.

O Jesu, let me draw near to Thee with the diligence of holy love. Teach me to join with all the company of Heaven in joyful exultation at Thy redeeming power.

My son, thou must behold all things which happen to Me upon the earth, not as they seem to earthly eyes, but in the vision of those who are with Me in My glory.

O Lord Jesu, how foolish am I to let earthly sorrow darken my understanding. Nay! let me make Thy grave my home, and, dead to earth, let me rejoice in all the movements of Thy heavenly kingdom.

MEDITATION III.

The Resurrection.

The gospel of God, which he promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures, concerning his Son, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh, who was declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection of the dead; even Jesus Christ our Lord, through whom we received grace and apostleship, unto obedience of faith among all the nations, for his name's sake.—Rom. 1. 1-5.

1. THE GLORIFIED HUMANITY.

No eye of man witnessed the Resurrection, for it was an act which human understanding could not fathom. As the act of Creation baffles the cognisance of human senses, so does the Resurrection of Jesus. It is not like the resurrection of Lazarus, coming back bound in grave-clothes to the life of earth, as if waking up from sleep. It is the beginning of a new Creation, the exaltation of man's nature to a region of spiritual power that is altogether new.

The Resurrection of Christ could not be seen by man, for it was a resurrection into a world where no human senses could follow it. There are many powers in nature to which we can have no immediate outer testimony. We know their existence by their results. So is it with the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. We experience its power because He went into a world beyond our natural gaze. He has entered upon the exercise of powers whose influence

we acknowledge, and from whose control none can escape.

We are not to think merely that He lived before in the region of the natural world, and is now passed over into the spiritual world. He might have done so, using His material organism as the instrument of action while He was here, and casting it away so as to act by purely spiritual power in His new estate. He has done much more than this. He has elevated His material nature to be for evermore the instrument of spiritual action, acting not according to the limitations proper to itself, but according to the powers of the spiritual world with whose operations it is henceforth to be identified. 'It is raised,' says St. Paul, 'a spiritual body' (1 Cor. xv. 44). That which lay in the sepulchre is transformed and glorified. It is not that it shines with the light of the Divine presence within it. So it shone once at the Transfiguration. Now it has passed into the world of spirit-life, and it manifests itself in this lower world, not by subjecting itself to our natural senses, but by communicating to those to whom its manifestation is made the supernatural power of the Spirit by which alone it can be perceived, as by that power alone it can draw near.

The whole human being of our Lord Jesus was glorified by the Resurrection. There was no part of it left in the grave. All was transformed. The action of the Divine presence filled the whole manhood, body and soul, with the renewed spiritual life which Adam's sin had forfeited, and the union with Godhead was a better, closer union than Adam could

claim. Adam lost the companionship of the Holy Ghost which filled his soul with spiritual life. Jesus being consubstantially united with the Godhead can have no part of His Being withdrawn from that Divine life. Whatever belongs to Him as a Person is, and must be, under the quickening influence of His Divinity. The law of His human life could suffer no violation. His human organism could not be maimed. All that He had assumed into vital connection with Himself He glorified, for that vitality was imperishable.

His material nature was thus completely taken up into the condition of spiritual life, and exempted from those conditions which fetter the created world.

That which makes a substance to be what it is, is force or power. Created substances are formed as parts of a whole, so as to be dependent one upon the other, with mutual attraction and antagonism. The Body of Christ was taken up by the resurrection so as to act with the sovereign power of the inherent Godhead, unimpeded by any lower forces belonging to the created world.

Space is the contemporaneous manifestation of many created forces as combined and opposed. The Body of Jesus is taken into a condition of superiority to all. Nothing can oppose it. It is therefore capable of appearing in any point of space at any moment. It disturbs not those forces in the midst of which it makes itself manifest, for disturbance implies antagonism, and antagonism implies the kindred character of those substances which replace one another. The Body of Jesus consequently appears as He wills. Space has for Him

no limitative power. He leaves the tomb, as afterwards He enters the Apostolic chamber, without any aperture through which to pass. He rises from the grave and shows Himself in various places, but it is without motion. Natural substances existing under the laws of space move in space by a change of relationship to the forces round about them. The Body of Jesus abides in its own glorious sovereignty, supreme over created forces. He has but to will, and instantly His Body is present to act upon the created forces round about Him in any place, without being Himself limited or opposed by any power, however solid it may seem. He Himself says, 'All power is given unto Me both in Heaven and upon earth.'

This condition of supreme power is altogether beyond our perception. We may argue up towards it, but we cannot apprehend it. We may experience its results, but we cannot know it in itself. All our knowledge is the result of experience, and until we are taken into the higher condition of life wherein Jesus is glorified we cannot know it. We never indeed can attain to know it as peers. It never can be to us an external object of observation. We can only know it as being made His members and living ourselves in Him. In proportion as the force of His Resurrection-Body moves us, we shall know the reality of the power of His resurrection. To see the Body of Christ as an external object would necessitate its becoming a co-ordinate object with the eye or the mind of the observer. If He condescends to make His presence manifest in any

way to our senses, it is by the exercise of a power of adaptation within Himself. In Himself He remains superior to all created knowledge. As no man knoweth the things of a man save the spirit of a man which is in Him, even so the things of the risen Christ 'knoweth no' created being 'but the Spirit of Christ alone,' and He to whom this Spirit communicates the fellowship of the same life.

O Jesu, who hast glorified our human nature by Thy Resurrection, do Thou, as Thou hast called me to partake of Thy glory, grant that I may live in its contemplation and know Thee in the eternity of Thy truth.

My son, thou must abide in Me with the loving exercise of faith, that so thou mayest grow to the full measure of that knowledge which I desire to give thee.

O Lord Jesu, I desire to know the fulness of Thy mystery, Thy truth, Thy love. No man can teach me that which I need. O let Thy loving Spirit perfect me in the blessed experience of Thy power, that Thou mayest be revealed within me, and I may attain Thy perfect knowledge and Thine endless life.

2. THE MANIFESTED GODHEAD.

Jesus was declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of Holiness by the resurrection from the dead. He did not enter into the Godhead by His resurrection, but he made manifest that Godhead which was His eternally.

No form of energy can pass from one order of nature to a higher. The virtues of the soil are taken up into the organism which is instinct with vegetable life, but the life into which they are taken is not theirs. It is the plant which lives. So the animal nourishes itself by feeding on other things, but nothing is transferred into the higher order of existence without ceasing to be itself. If by the decomposition of the higher organism it returns to be its simple self, it can claim no part in the life by which it was moved. That life was a power residing in the superior organism which conquered it and used it.

These operations of nature will serve to illustrate the power of the Godhead manifested in glorifying the Body of Christ. That Body could not rise to supernatural conditions of activity by any change within itself. It must become dead to the lower functions before it could live with the higher. If it was to die and then through death receive a nobler form of being, the new being would be a new thing. It rises to supernatural power by virtue of the Person to whom it belongs. That personal life cannot be given. Life is a sovereign power, and if the inferior object could receive it save so as to be ruled by it, the sovereign power must die. If some being, angelic or divine, were to raise a dead body and communicate to it the powers proper to its own spiritual condition, the corpse would be transformed, but the personality of him that was dead would be superseded by the personality which assumed it. The resurrection of Christ was therefore no new

assumption of His dead Body by an immortal. It was the manifestation of the immortal Presence which was resident within that Body previous to death, although less fully manifested, and even for the most part wholly concealed from human view. The Person of Christ was the very same after His resurrection which it was before.

So is it with ourselves. We know that the person of the child is the same as that of the full-grown man. The conditions of outward existence and action vary with the development of years. The same person amidst the casualties of later life may be at one time in slavery and at another seated upon a throne. So the Son of God is the very same before His death and after His resurrection. When He came to be born of Mary, He took upon Himself the form of a slave, and was found in fashion as a man (Phil. ii. 7), but being raised from the dead, He is shown by the Father as being both Lord and Christ (Acts ii. 36). Had He risen to a mere life amongst men, however great might be His miraculous control of the powers of nature, we should have had no proof of His true Godhead: but as He is raised into the mystical life superior to all material need and limitation, He must have had His origin from that Divine life into which he is exalted. The powers of that life might be in abeyance during the period of humiliation, but His Personality from the very first must have been adequate to their exercise. They must belong to Him by nature and insalienable necessity. Otherwise by His very exaltation He would be after all nothing more than a

lifeless piece of machinery at the disposal of some superior agent. Any lower life which He might have possessed before would be swallowed up by the supremacy of the higher energy into which He was taken.

By the resurrection, therefore, it was shown that Jesus was the Son of God. Had He remained acting, however gloriously, amongst the powers of nature as one of them, this Divine nature never could have been manifested. He whose name is secret (Jud. xiii. 18, Is. ix. 6) could not be manifested in His glory save by being taken from the realm of sensible manifestation into the secrecy of the Divine Existence, thence to make Himself manifest by the powers of a sovereign Presence superior to all created laws.

O Jesu, Son of God, I worship Thee. Though now I cannot see Thee as Thou art, I long to behold Thy glory in the fellowship of that life which none can have save in Thyself alone.

My son, I have called thee to be partaker of My Divine nature, to live as a member of My risen Body. Thou must be true to Me in all things, even as I am true to thee. The power of My Divine life shall shine out upon thee more and more as thou risest above earthly things in submission to the call which I have given thee.

O my Jesu, Thou hast called me into Thy Divine life, to live therein by regeneration, and as a priest to minister its gifts, and as a Religious to abide in

contemplation of its mysteries. Grant me indeed to experience the sweetness of Thy Divine bliss. We cannot know Thee in whom all sweetness is found unless we taste Thy sweetness with the inmost soul. Thou art my soul's supreme and only joy. To grow in the knowledge of Thee is to taste more and more of the sweetness of Thy Divinity. O ineffable sweetness of the Divine life, springing up within the soul by a mysterious consciousness! Blessed are all the outward pains which make me find the more such sweetness of Divine consolation ever ready to be manifested in Thee.

8. THE MEDIATORIAL HEADSHIP.

Jesus rises from the dead as the Firstborn, and the Head of the redeemed race. The glory which personally belongs to Him, His members share. The members have their different office and their respective gifts, but the Divine life which fills the risen Body is all one. Jesus is the Christ, and if Christ be in us the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness, and as Jesus the Head was raised from the dead, so shall He also quicken our mortal bodies by His Spirit which dwelleth in us (Rom. viii. 11, 12). The Life of all is truly one, even the Life of Jesus. The Life which we are called to share is His Life. It is not ours. We partake of it only in Him, but we partake of it as truly as He possesses it.

In order to partake of it we must be living entirely subject to Him as our Head. We can only

use His strength while we accomplish His will. Our natural self must die if we are thus to live in the power of resurrection. By sin we died to God. By grace we must become dead to our own dead selves, that thus we may regain that Life that has been forfeited, and abide with Jesus as the children of the resurrection. The work of grace cannot be within us unless there be this death unto sin and this rising again unto righteousness. It is the resurrection of Jesus Christ by which His members are justified (Rom. iv. 25). The righteousness of the faithful is the righteousness of God inherent within them as a principle of renewed vitality (2 Cor. v. 21), and until the life of the natural self is lost, the life of the Divine Head cannot be appropriated.

O Jesu, blessed be Thy glorious name. My only confidence is in knowing that I am wholly Thine. Thou hast purchased me for Thyself that I may be one of Thy members. Shall not I rejoice in the dignity of my calling, claiming Thee evermore as the Head of the Body and rejoicing to lose myself in Thee?

© My son, thou must wholly lose thyself, if thou wouldst find Me.

O my Lord, to lose myself is to be set free from evil, and to find Thee is to be created anew unto all good. Henceforth let me live wholly in Thee and for Thee. Why did I come into this priesthood, but that I might do Thy will the more completely by an entire dedication to the work of the sanctuary? Why did I take the vows of Religion, but that I might be the

more entirely cut off from the world and its manifold attractions, seeking in poverty, chastity, and obedience to be wholly given to Thee ?

Give thyself to Me, My son, with a persevering love. So shall all be well.

O my Jesu, I desire to be wholly Thine, to be dead to all but Thee, and live in the power of Thy resurrection, absorbed in the contemplation of the glory that is beyond the grave, while I act in submission to Thy will as being already alive from the dead by sharing in Thy life. He that is dead is freed from sin, and the freedom which Thou givest is the freedom of the grave, the freedom of the Spirit, the freedom of a life abiding evermore in God, the freedom of Thine own Almighty sovereignty, whereby Thou carriest out Thy work in all Thy members, and glorifiest Thy members for evermore in Thine own self.

MEDITATION IV.

The Earthquake.

And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled away the stone, and sat upon it. His appearance was as lightning, and his raiment white as snow: and for fear of him the watchers did quake, and became as dead men.—St. Matt. xxviii. 2-5.

1. THE ANGEL DESCENDING.

THE earthquake did not take place until the resurrection was complete. It seems to have had a double purpose, viz., to alarm and disperse the guards, and to roll away the stone so that the women might enter in.

The quaking of the earth was not occasioned by any convulsion from below, but was produced by the descent of the angel. He came as the Messenger of God to roll away the stone. The descent was not as the rushing of a whirlwind, sweeping with devastation far and near. It was directed to a particular object, the great sealed stone. We may well think of the event as if a flash of lightning struck the place, only that instead of smiting the vegetation with fire, the touch of the angel acted with mechanical violence on the huge mass which had required several men to roll it into its place. In an instant the stone rolled away. The bright form which touched it sat upon

The two terror-stricken guards felt themselves lead men in this awful presence.

We must consider the appearance of the angel.

It was as lightning. His movement was as the lightning flash in its speed. His countenance like the lightning in its glance.

Strange that the first noticeable event of the resurrection should seem to tell of Divine wrath! Yet it was not strange, for it was needful that the resurrection should be made known to foes before being announced to friends. It would thus be manifest that the occurrence was no invention of Christ's disciples. The moon had set, and it was dark. The countenance of the angel blazed. The guards trembled with dismay. The angel had come to do an errand of terror, but it was with a purpose of love. The guards must be scared away, otherwise it would be impossible for the women to come near.

We may observe that although God willed thus to excite alarm in the guards, there was in what happened no exercise of Divine vengeance. Men were affrighted but not smitten. Other angels will have charge of the vengeance in the day of wrath. That day was not come, but come it will. A countenance greater than that of the angel shall smite a sinful world in its impenitence.

His raiment was white as snow. The dazzling snow is the great emblem of renewed purity. As it covers the defiled earth with the whiteness of heaven it loses not its own brightness. The heavenly origin gives special fitness to the symbol. The dazzling lustre of the angel's robe told of a righteousness which must ever be fearful for the sinner to contemplate. Holiness is the joy of saints, but it is a terror to the unbelieving world.

O Jesu, how near to us are Thy holy angels ministering in attendance upon Thy Body, and yet we see them not. O that my heart were more constantly mindful of those awful presences which my outward eye is unable to behold !

I would scare those guards away, in order that the women might draw near, but I desire not to drive thee from Me. I would have thee come near in loving confidence. Therefore do I veil the glory which should be seen in all that belongs to Me.

O Lord, Thou dost veil Thy glory in condescension to our infirmity. Yet surely Thou requirest of us to be none the less watchful in our reverence.

O My son, thou must contemplate with the eye of faith the glory which belongs to My kingdom. If thou knowest the truth of thy calling, it is not needful for thee to be roused to reverence by outward display of My power. Better it is that thou shouldst acknowledge the sanctity of all heavenly things by inward movements of grace within thy heart. Correspond with these suggestions of My Holy Spirit, and thou shalt live in continual homage to Myself. The soldiers saw the angel and trembled. Thou knowest Me to be near and thou must reverence Myself.

O Jesu, the angel's descent made the earth to shake. Would that my heart could be shaken by the movements of Thy grace. Alas ! if at times my heart is shaken, yet the stone is not rolled away from the door of my heart.

My son, thou oughtest to be as My angel testifying of My resurrection to the world of the ungodly and to my loving people. Let not thine heart be closed as though I were a mere thing of death to be loved in the sleepy stillness of earth's dark night. Thou must experience the fellowship of heavenly energy. So shalt thou be able to testify truly of Me, seated upon the rock of My Divine promise.

O Jesu, how unworthy am I to testify of Thy resurrection when my heart is so absorbed in worldly thoughts and cares.

Have I not called thee into Religion? What hast thou to do with worldly thoughts and cares? The world may plead such things, but thou surely art set free from such things.

Alas! O Lord, Thou knowest how slow I am to rise to my calling. Love should be stronger than fear, but alas! the world in its fear puts me to shame when I find my sloth in corresponding with Thy love.

Rouse thyself, My son; let the violence of the angelic presence make thee realise the violence which must be done to nature if thou wouldst be true to the glory of My resurrection. I sit in calmness, but thou dost need to feel the earthquake and see the blinding light in order to become dislodged from earth and lose the fascination of its pleasures.

O Lord Jesu, in Thy mercy rouse me. Send whatever angel Thou wilt to make known the glory of Thy resurrection. Let me be roused by fear if I fail

to respond to Thy love. Sure I am that the angel who seems to me to be clad with terror is sent by Thee and speaks from Thee with a message of love that never fails.

2. THE GUARDS TERRIFIED.

The world seemed to have triumphed over Jesus, yet the fear of imposture must have been dictated by the consciousness of a power belonging to Him which was quite inconsistent with an impostor's claim. He had foretold His own resurrection, but surely if His disciples were now to pretend that He had risen they would be powerless to gain lasting credence for such a lie. No enthusiast could leave behind him a memory which could justify so tremendous an assumption when there was nothing to prove it. If the minds of men were prepared to believe that Jesus was risen again, even though they saw Him not, it must be because His previous ministry warranted, and if we can say that it warranted, we must also say that it necessitated such a supposition. There was a Divine power about the ministry of Jesus which could not be hushed in death. The love which Jesus had awakened would be ready to believe in His resurrection because it was no transient response to outward bounty, but a true acknowledgment of the power of God anointing, sealing, glorifying Him. Could He be hushed in death whose voice had called Lazarus back again? Those who had been present, whether friend or foe, knew that that voice could never die. He spoke to the depths

of the grave as a Sovereign, and in the power of the sovereignty of eternal life He would come forth from the grave. It were a more incredible miracle that such a voice should be hushed in death than that His body should come back again. They might know little of the manner in which His resurrection should be accomplished, but the heart which had known Jesus might well refuse to think that death could ever be the conqueror.

Only such thoughts as these could make the high priests fearful of imposture in such a matter as the resurrection of Jesus. Hatred was alive to the truth even more fully than love could be. Love might look into another world with hopes of some dispensation to be revealed beyond the grave. Therefore His followers, although evidently in no way losing their faith in Him, were yet preparing to treat His body with the honour which would be paid to any ordinary corpse. Hatred trembled lest He should be once more interfering with the things of earth, and knew full well that this was what His own words indicated as the inevitable sequel to His crucifixion.

The guards accordingly were left to watch the stone to which they had affixed their seal. A few hours more and the third day would have gone by, and the unbroken seal would be the witness to an imposture of which they hoped to hear no more.

How strangely did their fears testify to the truth ! The guard is set in order to keep watch, and now a power seizes upon them against which all human effort becomes absolutely nothing.

The sentries became as dead men in the presence

of the angel. They were obliged to tell of the vanity of all man's efforts against God. Ere any friend can come to tell of the resurrection, the guards fleeing away in consternation report the alarming news to Christ's enemies.

O Jesu, the soldiers announced Thy resurrection to the high priests who hated Thee. How must I then be bold to speak Thy truth to the world, even though I know that the world will strive to put that truth aside.

My son, the soldiers went to speak what they knew. Have thou the full assurance of faith, and thou wilt never fear to speak for Me in any company. Think not whether the world will hate thy message, but think whether that message be indeed the truth.

Yea, O Lord, I know in my heart the truth of Thy message, but I shrink from speaking when I ought, because it seems as if that message never could be believed by those who hate Thee.

O thou art foolish. If I have sent thee to speak of supernatural verities, shall I not make the truth triumphant by its own supernatural power. If I have given thee a message and thou in fear refusest to deliver it, surely thou art setting thyself to fight not against an angel only, but against Myself, the Lord of all the angels.

Jesu, my Lord, alas that I should so often have been fearful to speak for Thee. Indeed, henceforth I will obey Thee rather than man. That which I have

seen and heard I will indeed declare, and I know Thy Holy Spirit shall accompany me to make my words effectual, if only I can live to Thee.

8. THE OBDURACY OF THE HIGH PRIESTS.

The high priests had entered upon a war against Heaven. They had compassed the death of Jesus with a perfect knowledge that His miracles were the real ground of alarm, and that His death was their only hope of security. They had accepted the policy of murder in their conflict with truth.

The arrival of the soldiers bringing the tidings of the opened tomb is another stage of the conflict.

Now, then, they must carry on by lies the warfare which had begun with violence. The soldiers must be bribed to say that His disciples came and stole Him away while they slept.

Surely the end is worse than the beginning! If it was grievous to fight against Jesus clothed in the weakness of human form, how much more terrible to pretend that all is but imposture when the angel of God has come near to vindicate the Victim of their malice, and Jesus has risen from the grave as the triumphant Lord over whom death could have no power.

O terrible blindness! Yet is it what must ever be expected of those who put themselves in antagonism against the truth. As the sovereignty of God asserts itself by unmistakable signs the hardened heart becomes the more rebellious. When the understanding has been darkened by moral blindness, the will becomes maddened with the delirium of hatred.

Never must we be surprised that men reject Divine truth in spite of the clearest evidences. The heart which is not ruled by Divine love must find itself in deadly feud with Divine truth. While truth remains in obscurity there is little need to take up arms against it. When truth begins to show the tokens of victory it becomes necessary for the rebellious heart to meet it in the panoply of hell. The heart that will not love can never accept the truth of God's revelation, for God is love. Hatred cannot be subdued by demonstration. It only becomes idiotic and outrageous in the presence of its own convictions.

O Jesu, fill my heart with the love of Thy truth.

Set thy affections upon heavenly things, and thou shalt find in My resurrection the fulness of joy.

Lord, when I contemplate Thy resurrection I feel indeed my folly in not yielding myself more simply to Thy will. O let the world do with me whatever it can, but let me never deny Thy truth in order to please the world.

My son, the soldiers were the servants of the high priests, and were bribed to do their masters' bidding against the truth. Remember that thou art one of My soldiers, and thou must be careful to speak alway in assertion of My truth. Knowest thou what I will give thee if thou art true to My bidding?

Yea, Lord, I know that Thou wilt call me to bear witness to Thy truth by my life as well as by my lips

by suffering as well as by speech. These are the gifts which Thou dost set before me, even the participation of Thy Cross. Yet, Lord, Thy gifts are better than the world can give. If Thou callest us to suffer with Thee in bearing witness to the truth, Thou wilt call us to enter along with Thee into the glory of the resurrection that shall follow.

Yea, My son, My gifts to My chosen ones are gifts of suffering, that they may be along with Me in the way of sorrows and enter with Me into the joy that shall be afterward.

O Jesu, when I speak of Thy resurrection I look forward to enter into the joy thereof. Shall I not willingly suffer all things according to Thy will, that I may know the blessed power of that love wherein Thou callest me to live with Thee for ever ?

MEDITATION V.

The Risen Saints.

And the tombs were opened; and many bodies of the saints that had fallen asleep, were raised; and coming forth out of the tombs after his resurrection they entered into the holy city and appeared unto many.—St. Matt. xxvii. 52-53.

1. THE GRAVES OPENED.

It was not the shaking occasioned by the angel's descent which opened the graves. That descent had reference only to the one sepulchre and the removal of the stone when Jesus had already risen. The opening of the tombs in Jerusalem was a result of the earthquake at the time of our Lord's death. That was a quaking from within the earth, a quaking of the powers of darkness by reason of the descent of the Soul of Jesus to triumph in their ancient abode. We do not know the relation which there is between the material globe on which we dwell and the powers of evil who are subject to the Prince of the world. Of the reality of that relationship we need have no doubt. Hence the physical phenomena at the time of our Lord's death were to be expected as being naturally attendant upon His overthrow of the spiritual powers of darkness, and we may in like manner expect similar physical phenomena, as our Lord has predicted, when the time of the end shall draw near.

The opening of the graves was a portent which belongs to the scenes of the Passion, for it happened on Good Friday. It is with the resurrection of the saints that we are now specially concerned, for that event belongs to Easter Day. These bodies cannot come out of their graves until our Lord's Body has risen. He must be the 'firstfruits of them that slept' (1 Cor. xv. 20).

The opening of the graves is not enough to recall the souls that the buried sleepers may arise. The souls rejoice to regain the life of the Spirit, but the bodies of them that sleep cannot arise merely in the strength of this life of their souls. The body can only arise in the fellowship of Christ's Body, as belonging to Him. Until the prison-house be broken open by the resurrection of Christ, the souls that are detained therein, although quickened with new life, cannot come forth and assert for themselves their freedom.

O Jesu, great is the power of Thy redeeming love whereby Thou hast broken the power of the enemy. O grant me to rise in the fellowship of Thy sanctifying grace, that, as Thou hast set me free from his tyranny, I may walk in the glorious liberty of the children of God.

My son, thou must indeed be constantly looking to Me. Trust not in the work which I have done as if that were all that thou needest. Thou must look to Me as the captain of thy salvation, and follow Me where I go before thee in holiness.

Jesu, we have waited for Thee, and Thou alone couldst give us victory. Thou hast conquered, and still would I wait upon Thee, for I cannot enter upon the fruits of Thy victory unless Thou go before.

Thou must abide with Me until the time come, that so thou mayest enter into the rest that I have provided. The souls of the saints waited although the graves were opened. Thou must wait until the end of all things for the full entrance into thy reward, although I have even now made the way open for thee.

Lord, I am content to wait, for I know that I must rely upon Thee. Thou never failest them that seek Thee.

2. THEIR UNION WITH CHRIST.

The souls of the faithful had all along been bound to Christ by earnest expectation. They are the 'prisoners of hope' of whom Zechariah speaks (ix. 12). Although they looked forward to Christ, yet they did not receive the promises while they were living upon earth. 'They died in faith,' but 'could not be made perfect without us,' that is to say, not until Christ came to establish the covenant of grace which He has made with us who belong to the New Dispensation.

They looked forward to Christ, but the grave was to them a place of sadness and of gloom. 'The dead praise not Thee, O Lord, neither all they that go down into silence' (Ps. cxv. 17). They were under Satan's power, although they received some gifts of

refreshment. Abraham's bosom, and the place where Dives was in torment, constituted one receptacle, although there was a gulf which separated the faithful from the unfaithful, and that gulf could not be crossed by any.

Long life was therefore an object of great desire to the ancient Jew, because he dreaded going down to the grave. His soul would have to wait with his fathers' in the dreary pit wherein was no water.

When Simeon took Jesus in his arms he could say, 'Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace,' for now that Christ was born upon earth, the time of waiting would not be long. Jesus would soon go down to give light to them that were in darkness and in the shadow of death. Simeon could go to his fathers in peace, knowing that the time of his sojourn in the darkness should so soon be over.

And now while the earth has quaked those spirits have felt their refreshment. The quaking of their oppressor was calmness to them. The Conqueror who binds the strong man is their Deliverer, their Peace.

The Soul of Jesus, when liberated from the veil of flesh, shone in that region of darkness with the soft power of the Blessed Spirit of Light which filled it.

Who can imagine the joyous peace which gladdened all that region with the outpouring of Divine fulness: as the prophet says, 'The Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended' (Is. lx. 20).

In the radiant Soul of Jesus the very Sun of

Righteousness has risen upon them with healing on His wings. If Abraham rejoiced to see the day of Christ afar off, how did he now rejoice to find the Kingdom of Heaven accomplished.

Jesus had come and preached the Gospel to them that were dead, that they might live according to God in the Spirit (1 Pet. iv. 6). This preaching was not an invitatory preaching as when the Gospel is preached to man upon earth. It was a proclamation of the Kingdom of Heaven for which those holy souls had been so long looking forward. It was the opening of the prison to them that were bound, for the acceptable year of the Lord had come (Is. lxi. 2). In this world the Gospel is preached in order to win subjects to Jesus, that His kingdom may come to its completeness. Fresh subjects have to be won from the oppressor's yoke, for Satan's power in this world shall not cease until he be cast into the abyss. But the saints who waited for the Gospel to be preached to them by Jesus when He should descend into hell, heard the proclamation as the announcement of their long-loved King coming near to bind their enemy and set them free. At that voice they rose in jubilee. The friend of the bridegroom rejoiced to hear the bridegroom's voice even upon earth. Much more did he rejoice as the voice broke anew upon his ear. This is He that was for to come. The waiting souls recognise the Divine Voice saying as of old, 'Let there be light;' and there is light in every one of those blank intelligences. We may specially use the 28rd Psalm as intended to apply to them. It is a Psalm of Exodus in which the ransomed seed of Messiah come forward and declare

the righteousness of God, proclaiming to a future dispensation what God hath done for them (Ps. xxii. 81). The chosen seed are walking through the valley of the shadow of death and yet they fear no evil, trusting in the power of the Cross. The xxivth Psalm announces the coming of the Shepherd King to deliver them. When the angel host speak for the first time to the Eternal Gates that they may admit the King of Glory, we are probably to understand the words as being addressed to the powers of hell. The answer corresponds with this idea. 'It is the Conqueror who is come to you, the Lord mighty in the battle of the Cross.' On the second occasion, when the words are addressed to the powers of the Heavenly heights, the King of Glory is announced as 'the Lord of hosts,' because He does not come alone, but He brings with Him the multitude of His redeemed whom He has brought up from the land of the enemy.

So, again, we may take Ps. cxvi. as being especially a psalm of the expectant souls by which those who were in the snares of death confess their confidence and joy in the sure and certain hope of Jehovah's advent. It follows upon the mention of the silent grave, Ps. cxv., and prepares the way for the brief but exulting Psalm (cxvii.) which follows. The preceding psalms especially belong to the earlier dispensation. The cxviith is the Gospel appeal of the Church Catholic to all the nations.

Marvellous was the joy of those souls when they heard the voice of the Lord God speaking to them. It was indeed to them as the sweet cool of the day, but it was also thus that to them at eventide there

should be light. It was the light of a day that should have no darkness, the refreshing fulness of a peace which should have no end, the completion of old promises, the opening of a new covenant.

Thus were those souls transformed into light by the manifestation of the Soul of Jesus in the midst of them. He has accomplished the propitiation of which Jewish sacrifices could offer only the ineffectual types. Verily God declares His righteousness by the forgiveness of their sins that were past (Rom. ii. 25). Their welcome of Christ was a real union of soul with Soul, so as to make them the children of God, partakers of the Divine nature. The gift of regeneration which is the starting point of our Christian course was the crowning act of Divine mercy to them. They become truly one with Jesus. Now are they indeed light in the Lord. In the strength of this regeneration they arose from the grave along with Him, their souls united to His Soul, and consequently their bodies glorified in union with His glorious Body.

This serves to explain the distinction which St. Paul apparently draws between the spirits of just men made perfect, that is to say, the saints which are now clothed with their bodies having risen with Christ because they belonged to the pre-Christian dispensation, and the general assembly and church of the firstborn whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life, the saints of the Christian dispensation who are waiting now in Paradise to take up their crowns and receive their crown at the Lord's hand at the last day.

Perhaps we may apply to them those other words of St. Paul, wherein he says that every man is raised in his own order; Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at His coming, i.e., when He appeared gloriously to claim them as His own from the depth of hell; then the resurrection of the Christian Church cometh at the end when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father (1 Cor. xv. 24).

O Jesu, joy of the patriarchs, how can I worthily praise Thee that Thou hast called me into Thy kingdom of grace! Give me grace that I may continue in this state of salvation unto my life's end.

My son, consider those of whom the world was not worthy, for they walked in faith, looking forward to My appearing, although they received not then those gifts of grace which I have bestowed upon thee. Labour now so to use those gifts which I have given, that thou mayest be found worthy to have thy place along with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the great feast of the eternal kingdom.

O Jesu, let nothing separate me from Thee. In Thee let me live, in Thee let me die. In dying to the world I shall live in Thee with Thine own eternal life while I behold Thine eternal glory.

My son, thou must use the life which I have given thee as one of My members, that with all My saints thou mayest enjoy My life, when together with My dead body they shall arise. Let nothing separate thee from Me now, for

there can be no union with ~~Me~~ accomplished in the grave at any time hereafter.

Yea, Lord, I know that now Thou wilt never again descend into hell. There remaineth no more sacrifice for sin. Thou callest me to feed upon Thy living sacrifice, and unless I now press onward in its strength unto the mount of God, I shall look in vain in that other world for any to whom to go seeking to purchase the necessities for the journey.

8. THEIR APPEARANCE IN THE HOLY CITY.

It was as members of Christ that the saints had their gift of resurrection bestowed upon them. We must not suppose that there was any arbitrary selection as to the souls which should thus be raised. It is not likely that any were left behind who were capable of this union with Christ by the discipline of faith and hope and love wrought in them upon earth. God acts not by a system of individual prerogative and favouritism, but by processes of law in both worlds, material and spiritual. Whoever therefore were waiting for Christ would receive their bodies and rise in them and be 'perfected,' according to St. Paul's phrase, as His members. If any were left behind they would be incapable of Christian resurrection at the last day, not having been made members of Christ by regeneration in Holy Baptism.

As our Lord was forty days upon the earth, so doubtless these saints, His glorified members, were upon the earth during that time. They were upon the earth, but did not belong to our earthly life.

They lived not by the natural powers of human life, but by the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of Christ.

They would not naturally be visible to human eye, but we know that they appeared to many in the Holy City, even as our Lord Himself appeared to many during those forty days.

Of the details of those mysterious visitations we are not informed, nor who they were that appeared, nor to whom. Probably, however, it was only to holy persons that they appeared, and they may have established some in Christ and drawn many more to Him. Probably those who appeared were such as had recently died, whose friends were still living upon earth.

O Jesu, would that Thy saints could come back now from their graves with their risen bodies to make manifest Thy transforming power as their Ascended Saviour!

None would believe any the more because of such portents.

O Jesu, if men could but see one who had come back, surely many would give themselves up to the hope of the Gospel and live.

My son, thou must take care and live in the power of union with Me. The sight of the blessed will cheer those who look to Me and find in Me their satisfaction.

O Jesu, uphold Thou me with the cords of the regenerated nature, that I may be found in Thee and not shut out when the feast of the kingdom shall be spread. Lord Jesu, come quickly.

MEDITATION VI.

The Maries and Salome.

And when the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, bought spices, that they might come and anoint him.

And very early on the first day of the week, they come to the tomb when the sun was risen. And they were saying among themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the tomb? and looking up, they see that the stone is rolled back: for it was exceeding great.—St. Mark xv. 1-4.

Now on the first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, while it was yet dark, unto the tomb, and seeth the stone taken away from the tomb. She runneth therefore, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we know not where they have laid him.—St. John xx. 1, 2.

1. THE STONE ROLLED AWAY.

THE guards had fled in terror as the angel descended from Heaven to take their place and watch beside the tomb. All therefore was now once more quiet. The angel's countenance no longer flashed with terror upon the beholders. He had driven away the evil. His presence was joyous and calm. The struggle of the Church militant had been exchanged for the sweet peace of Jerusalem. The gentle light of the opening day had succeeded to the darkness. In silent majesty the angel sat within the vestibule of the sepulchre, waiting for those whom God would bring near by the mysterious attraction of reverent love. Brighter, purer was the light which filled the sepulchre than even the first joy of nature when the eyelids of the dawn are lifted up. It took the place of a deeper darkness than that

which covered the external world. It was the visitation of a world redeemed from sin.

Meanwhile the darkness as it passed away left clear to sight three figures drawing near. It is Mary Magdalene and Mary the Mother of James and Salome, who are coming with the spices purchased overnight to assist in embalming the Body of the Lord.

Although they may not have been far distant at the time, yet they probably knew nothing of the earthquake. It was, as we have seen, very different in its character from that earlier convulsion of nature which opened the tombs when our Lord died. It is not likely that the shaking was felt beyond a little way, for it was the result of a purely local event. Even if the women were in any way conscious of some concussion, they would not be inclined to attribute it to anything connected with the object of their visitation. It is indeed difficult for us to remember how utterly unaware these women were of what had just happened or would happen soon. They had no thought of the Body of Christ as being in any other condition than to claim the attentions rendered to the dead. So far from having any hope of Christ's immediate resurrection, they were unwilling even to believe it.

As they came near they spake one to another, wondering who should roll away the stone. Mary Magdalene however could not refrain herself. She hurries on more quickly than her senior companions. They follow, wrapt in sorrow, which shrouds them still, although the darkness of night has passed away.

In all our sorrow we must be drawing near to Jesus. Yet must we come to Him rather because love draws us near than because we would have our outward trouble done away. Love is the solace of its own sadness. The love of Jesus gives consolation even though Jesus be not exerting His power to remove the difficulty. It is those who have the purest love who shall have the fullest consolation.

The grave of Jesus is the centre of penitential sorrow, for He has died bearing our sins in His own Body on the Tree. It is our sins which have occasioned our loss of His presence, and still when we seem dead because He is hidden, it is sin which brings back the darkness and seems to close up the tomb.

Oh! who can roll the stone away from the door, the great stone of our sin. It must be a messenger from Heaven, and he can do it only in the strength of the resurrection of Jesus.

O Jesu, I desire to bring to Thee the offering of penitence, but do Thou of Thy goodness send Thine angel that my sin may not block the way of my approach to Thee.

My son, I have put away thy sin, and if thou wilt come to My sepulchre, dying to the world, thou shalt find My angel waiting to assure thee of thy welcome.

O Jesu, my soul was indeed in darkness when I came forth from my own dwelling. My own abode is dark with sin; but as I draw near to Thee the daylight shines upon me. The very thought of Thee

lights up my heart. I know not what to hope for, for my sin is greater than I can put away, but I hope in Thee. Better to trust in Thee and not to know anything of the future, than to look forward with an expectation limited by any created power. My love even in its despair finds solace, drawing near unto Thy tomb. If I find not my joy in Thee, there is nowhere else in which it can be found.

Some then in trustful love. The day shines upon thee, though thou heed it not, even the brightness of My pardoning grace which draws thee near. Thy sins though they are many shall be forgiven, if in truth thou lovest much. I have ordained a ministry of grace to take away thy sin and call thee to the mystical life of My redeemed.

O Blessed Jesu, Thy love surpasses all my thought. I have sinned and have no right to enter Thy sanctuary, but Thou art risen and Thou callest me to walk with Thee in newness of life as one that is dead unto the past. Thou hast triumphed over my sin that I may come to Thee and find in Thy grave the light of life eternal quickening me to holiness.

2. MARY MAGDALENE HASTING ONWARD.

We may well conceive how the first rays of morning lit up the place of burial as the women were drawing near, and at the sight of it Mary Magdalene ran forward. They could see the spot, but they could not see that the stone was rolled

away, for the construction of the approach hid the mouth of the cave from their view.

As Mary Magdalene entered she saw that the way to the interior was open. The stone was rolled away. The loss seems almost greater than the loss by death. It brings the reality of death fully before her consciousness. Death did not seem to have gained a complete victory while she could minister to the Body which was so precious in her sight : but now the Body is gone. It has been snatched from the tomb. Why it has been done, who can tell? Death is indeed complete ! Even the visible form of the loved one that lived is taken away. Surely it is by hands that heed it not ! Is it not cast where the loving heart can never discover it ?

Her grief recognises the loss only too plainly. A moment suffices to see that discovery is hopeless. Whatever might be the purpose of rolling away the stone, the opening of the tomb has resulted for her in a robbery which leaves her absolutely destitute.

Is it not often thus with us ? The stone of difficulty is rolled away. We longed for its removal. Yet when it is gone we find that the special object is gone for whose sake we desired to have it removed. We know not that the change has come over everything, and that what we seek is nearer to us by its disappearance than it would be if outwardly manifest.

We hasten onward with impetuous eagerness, but it is with the thought that what we seek is dead. The object may be religious, but we love it with a merely carnal love, as if it were a thing belonging to this present world. We fail to realise

the spiritual powers inherent therein, or the purposes of God developing in modes which baffle our present calculation.

Our zeal is good, but our impetuosity is blind. In the craving of our own personal desire we dishonour that to which we cling. We would sooner have it accessible even as the tenant of a grave, than lose our hold upon it by its elevation to a higher order of activity. We do not recognise that the law of death involves such outward loss not so that it shall be an aggravation of sorrow, but as a condition of imperishable fellowship in life.

Our earthly judgment can only hasten onwards as towards a grave. We can form no estimate of the glorious developments of spiritual energy in which the work of God is to be perfected. Consequently the stages of such developments perplex us and fill us with much sorrow. We need to be purified from earthly considerations in order to follow onward in the track of the Divine predestination. God's purposes are far above out of our reach, and we are wanting in that simplicity of faith whereby we might rest entirely satisfied in His all-wise control.

Blessed is the knowledge of Jesus by natural apprehension if we advance from it to the higher knowledge whereby He calls us to follow Him in newness of life ; but even the very knowledge of Jesus loses its truth if it be accepted as adequately expressing the conception in which He is henceforward to be known, and not as the basis of an organic development wherein the spiritual operations of His presence are to be found.

O Jesu, I desire to know Thee no longer after the flesh. From such knowledge I must press onward, if I am to honour Thee as Thou truly art.

Yea, My son, thou must seek Me not in the grave of the lower nature which seemed to engulf Me, but in the power of the new life wherein My Divine power shall be exerted.

O Jesu, I am ready to look forward to such glorification of Thyself in all that belongs to Thee, but I cannot accept the conditions of death and shame through which Divine wonders are to be attained.

Nature must die if grace is to shine forth triumphant.

Yea, Lord, but let me still retain even that which has died ; so shall I the better rejoice in what rises out of the grave.

Nay, My son, it must be lost to thee if it is to be found in God.

How then can I lay hold thereof, good Lord ?

Thou must die to the sinful world if thou wouldst really hasten onward to me in the resurrection. Thou canst not know by reason what it is to die, but thou must know it by faith if thou wouldst truly lay hold on Me.

O Jesu, let me die, if through the tomb I can thus rise to contemplate Thy heavenly throne. I would hasten onward to Thee, not to find Thee as my natural heart has imagined, but to be found in Thee as Thy Divine love has foreordained.

3. HER EAGER HASTE TO TELL PETER AND JOHN.

The language of St. John seems to imply that Peter and John were not at the same place when Mary Magdalene went to both of them. It was still the very early morning. Not improbably the Blessed Virgin was taking rest after the great excitement of the preceding days. May we not think of the sweetness of that rest while she thought of her Son resting in the grave from all His toil? This would account for their not seeming to have made her acquainted with the tidings which the Magdalen brought. Salome had gone, we know, beforehand to the sepulchre.

Although the Apostles may not have been living under one roof, yet it seems natural to expect that their lodging would be near to one another, and Mary in going from one to the other could easily arrange for their meeting that they might set out for the sepulchre without delay.

She herself had evidently come back with the utmost speed. It was the haste not of necessity but of excitement, and quite natural under the circumstances, especially for a person of her temperament. She does not seem even to have told the women who went along with her.

She had not looked into the sepulchre sufficiently to see the angel seated there, or else the angel did not make himself manifest to her. Probably the manifestation of his presence would not be like that of a natural object, the same to all. He would make himself manifest to those whom he pleased or to

God sent him. God sent him to soothe the women. Mary was not to have this solace, as to experience a deeper trial of faith, a pang of love. Eventually she was to have special manifestation, not of an angel, but of himself.

Our impetuosity we often expose ourselves to which would have been avoided if we had more calm. We should learn to wait in stillness upon the Lord. The affection may be intense, as an earthly affection, having more of human than of Divine faith, which feels any hasty bewilderment because Christ seems to be hidden from the soul than of yore. We must be able to bear the trial when at any season God hides himself. We shall find ourselves unable to explain phenomena. We are not to think that we are chosen of God because we do not see the tokens of presence.

Mary hastened to Peter and John. Though her joy may have been exaggerated, yet she did rightly long to communicate with those who bore office. We could communicate our anxieties to those who are near us in the Lord. Their sympathy will be of strength.

Jesu, quicken my anticipations, but strengthen me that I may always abide in patience. Though I may lose Thee for a season, let me feel assured that I shall find Thee if I abide in the communion of saints.

1, thou must look to have My presence

more effectually revealed in the sympathy brotherly love than in the solitary power any personal regard, however intense. We must know Me in My relation to My Church if thou wouldst know Me in My relation thyself.

Yea, Lord, my very love to Thee will make me feeble if I rest in my own experience of Thy love, for my experience is very faulty, although Thy love truly Divine.

Even so, My son; rise out of thyself as thou shalt learn more of Me.

O Lord, raise Thou me up that I may behold Thy glory in the fulness of the truth.

MEDITATION VII.

The Angel at the Tomb.

And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which hath been crucified. He is not here; for he is risen, even as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly, and tell his disciples. He is risen from the dead; and lo, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you. And they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to bring his disciples word.—St. Matt. xxviii. 5-8.

And entering into the tomb, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, arrayed in a white robe; and they were amazed. And he saith unto them, Be not amazed: ye seek Jesus, the Nazarene, which hath been crucified: he is risen; he is not here: behold, the place where they laid him! But go, tell his disciples and Peter. He goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him, as he said unto you. And they went out, and fled from the tomb; for trembling and astonishment had come upon them; and they said nothing to any one; for they were afraid.—St. Mark xvi. 4-8.

1. THE YOUNG MAN SEATED ON THE RIGHT SIDE.

THE stone had been lifted out of the cavity in which it rested and lay in some recess which hid it from external view. There the angel was, seated upon it. He had been sent down for this ministry (Heb. i. 14) to assist the women. The presence of the soldiers would have made it impossible for the women to come. The angel had driven them away, and now he was there himself to minister to them with words of comfort.

It does not seem that the women had any knowledge of the watch having been placed there. A superficial reading of St. Matthew's narrative would lead one to think that the angel contrasted his words of encouragement to them with his words of terror in

scaring the soldiers away. Such, however, plainly could not be the case. The women would not have come near enough while the guards remained in their station to allow of such an interpretation. The contrast which the angel's words imply must have existed only in the speaker's mind. 'The soldiers had to fear, and they are fled: but fear not ye. Ye who honour Jesus the Lord shall find only consolation at His tomb.' That which amazed the women was to find any one seated thus in guardianship beside the doorway of the tomb. They were amazed to find the stone removed, the young man seated on it, his raiment shining white as snow and his countenance as lightning filling the cave with supernatural lustre. Both the presence and the form awoke their wonder: and he had words to tell them of the strangest import. 'Jesus of Nazareth is not here; He is risen. Come see the place where the Lord lay.'

They could not doubt that this young man was an angel of the Lord. He said indeed Fear not ye, but they trembled. They felt themselves to be in the presence of another world. The stranger sees their alarm and soothes them. 'Fear not ye.' They were amazed at the intervention as they saw the young man seated on the stone, but they knew themselves to be engaged upon a work of love to Jesus the Lord of Heaven. The presence therefore of the angel was welcomed by them. It seemed natural, however strange. How their hearts long to receive the fullness of grace, and yet it seems as if a strange new world had opened to them into which they fear to look. So indeed it was. The door had been opened

into a new world for them and for mankind by the resurrection of Jesus. The angel was one of the sentries of that new world. It was natural that he should be at the grave of Jesus, as it is natural that the soldiers of an earthly empire should be on guard in the neighbourhood of some royal residence. Here the disciples will be coming to seek the Lord. The angel is come to give them instructions from Him.

And yet the women could understand but little of what had happened. They could only feel the strangeness of the heavenly presence into which they had been so suddenly initiated. They had come to honour the dead Body of their Lord. They found themselves within the influence of His risen glory. What they saw was no result of enthusiastic anticipation. It was the very overthrow of their calm and solemn preparations and purposes.

Probably they left their spices at the tomb as they fled away.

O Jesu, grant that I may feel the presence of Thy holy angels ready to protect me when the powers of the world are threatening to oppress.

Fear, My son, not only one angel but an innumerable company are ever attendant upon My Church. Fear not outward things, for they are at hand to drive away all harmful things from such as really draw near to Me with reverence and love.

O Lord, how dost Thou in a moment dissipate all the powers of earth ! Alas that I should ever either fear them or hope for them !

I suffer them to gather round about thee that thou mayest learn the more truly to put thy whole trust in My heavenly protection. In a moment I can dispel them all, and in a moment I will dispel all that is opposed to My Church, at the very time when the enemy thinks to have gained the completest victory.

Lord, I will look upwards to Thee with perfect confidence, whatever may assail. It is not by the powers of the world that Thou wilt protect me, neither is there any power in the world which can resist Thee.

My son, come to My grave. Seek Me as one who has died to the world: so shalt thou find what it is to live in the powers of the world beyond.

Alas, good Lord, I am too apt to seek Thee in the world. Therefore I do not find Thee. O grave most full of holy joy where Thy Body has lain in death! Draw me after Thee, dear Lord, that I may no longer have any thought of that world which Thou hast left. Let me be wholly dead along with Thee. The dead, the dead shall praise Thee, as I would do this day, for henceforth it is only the dead who are truly living, for Thou, the living Lord, hast died.

Yea, My son. If thou wouldst see My angel, thou must not seek his presence amidst the great things of this world which I have left. Never shall he be wanting to those who follow Me to the grave and die to the world. But never can he save My people if they seek a home in that world to which I have died.

Good Lord, help me to be wholly dead. Therefore hast Thou called me into Religion, that in deadness to the world I might experience Thy power. O suffer not my heart to return to that world from which Thou hast called me. Let me indeed be dead to it, that I may rejoice in the power of the world to come wherein Thou callest me to live for evermore.

2. HE IS RISEN.

We may well wonder what meaning the women attached to these words. Probably they would have no idea of a resurrection greater or different in kind from that of Lazarus. It was not necessary that they should. Gradually the truth was to come home to the intelligence of the company of the disciples. First they must learn the fact which, although so frequently foretold of Jesus, they had never yet really accepted. He could not be holden by the powers of the grave. He had conquered death. He had risen.

This truth which we see to be so essential was a stupendous truth for the mind to receive. They had to learn that our Lord's words, however stupendous, were to be taken in their literal meaning. Facts must rise up to the supernatural order of the Divine speaker who announces them. The words of the Divine speaker must not be dwarfed to the measure of the natural intelligence of those whom He addresses.

Even amongst Christians now, how few have any idea of the real purpose and glorious character of our Lord's resurrection! We may see then that it was

well for the minds of the disciples to have this truth brought home to them by degrees.

The two women were to go and tell His disciples and Peter. The message included a special mention of Peter, and yet we know that before the women could reach the company of disciples, Peter would himself have seen the empty tomb. This message fits in, however, with the narrative of St. John. We are told of the beloved disciple that he saw and believed. Probably this intimates a contrast between him and the others. Simon Peter was still thinking rather of some foul play to which they had been made a victim. His eyes had testified to the fact. He is not here. He still needs to be taught by the women that 'Jesus is risen.'

O Jesu, blessed be Thy name for that Thou dost thus gradually unfold Thy truth so as to shine upon our understandings. Grant that I may accept all that Thou teachest with such simplicity of heart as to be able to receive what Thou teachest more.

My son, it is only by degrees that thou canst receive My truth. Thy nature needs to be changed, for My truth is spiritually discerned. Yet must thou be of good comfort. I have given thee My Spirit and My mind, that thou mayest know what the Spirit saith unto the Churches.

O Lord Jesu, gradually dost Thou teach what the Father sends Thee to teach, that so our feebleness may be better instructed in the truth by the experience of successive changes.

Yea, My son, and I will by degrees so

do. I also use various agents to be the channels of My communications. Those who would learn of Me must be prepared to receive their teaching from any one of My instruments with equal thankfulness.

Surely, Lord, Thy truth is one, by whomsoever it may be spoken. Thou canst speak to me equally by the mouth of women as by the utterance of angels. Send therefore by whomsoever Thou wilt; and give us humility that we may receive Thy truth according to Thy will, and if Thou choosest us to speak Thy truth, give also humility to know our nothingness, that we may not be moved by any thought of pride in consequence of the ministry to which we are called.

My son, honour thou My grave, and I will use thee to speak of My glory. Embalm that which seems to be dead with grateful meditation, and thou shalt find a life in Me which no powers of evil can resist.

O Lord, I know full well Thy truth can never die. Whatever appearance of death may seem to come over Thy truth from age to age, it shall only manifest Thy triumph over death by some new manifestation of the power of Thy resurrection.

Yea, My son, I will conquer the successive powers which assail Me in ways which those who love Me best have never anticipated, and I will use for the purposes of My triumph those who never thought to be entrusted with My message.

Lord, when I come to Thee I know not in what way Thou wilt show to me Thy power. O let me

bear some message of Thy truth to Thy Church. Though I am unworthy, use me. Yea, because I am unworthy, choose me. Yea, let Thy truth be manifest in its Divine reality because it is not what human wisdom hath taught or human imagination hath conceived.

8. THE APPOINTMENT IN GALILEE.

Whatever other purposes may have determined the appointment of our risen Lord to meet His disciples in Galilee, one purpose plainly was to bring home to their memory the teaching of His earlier ministry, that they might receive the gifts of the resurrection-life as the true and proper outcome of that ministry. Although He would appear to His disciples in various unexpected ways while still tarrying in Jerusalem, they were to look forward to a collective manifestation in Galilee, whither they would go in accordance with a special appointment made with them before His death. Thus He showed the continuity of His will before His death and after His resurrection, and He showed that the appearances were no matters of artifice or delusion, because the disciples were to assemble in expectation of this appearance in obedience to a command issued so long before.

The place was assigned, and we may well suppose the time was assigned also. This will account for the disciples not hurrying off immediately to Galilee, which otherwise one would have expected them to do. The various tidings of His manifestation vouchsafed to special individuals were sure in the mean-

while to establish the great bulk of the disciples in a confidence that He was really risen from the dead.

Samuel's appointment to meet with Saul was evidently made contingent upon some intervening event, and in like manner our Lord Jesus may well have appointed to meet in Galilee not as soon as possible after His resurrection, but on the lapse of a given interval.

We may also see that the mention of this meeting in Galilee added great strength to the credibility of the women's announcement. The vision might well have seemed an idle dream if it had not thus fitted in with some previous fact.

How this illustrates for us the continual law of Christ's growing manifestation. His successive revelations are a continual development of germinant truth existing in the earlier form of revelation out of which they spring. This historic continuity is a guarantee of the vital integrity of the whole process of revelation ; for in the earlier period there is an expectation of somewhat, and that somewhat remains unknown until the expectation is fulfilled, and in the later period the manifestation seems to belong to another world, so that we might well doubt if it were not a dream, but the instruments of the manifestation were provided in the earlier period, and thus we see how the supernatural issue is manifested by the preparation made in the past. Also we see here how exactly the development of revelation is analogous to the development of God's work in the physical creation, the order of existence suggesting the form which is to be, although itself incapable of rising up to it.

Jesu, Thy word is unchangeable and Thy truth is made known from age to age, the same in itself, however adapting itself to our changeful necessities and the growing gifts of Thy grace.

My son, thou must never omit that which I have commanded thee to do, as if by some subsequent gift of My love I had set the previous commandment aside. I change not, and thou must be attentive to fulfil what I have said.

Yea, Lord, step by step will I follow Thee. That which Thou hast commanded I will observe. That which Thou hast promised I will expect. That which Thou givest I will cherish, and all things thus according to Thy holy will shall lead me on to know that which Thou art.

MEDITATION VIII.

Peter and John.

Peter therefore went forth, and the other disciple, and they went toward the tomb. And they ran both together: and the other disciple outran Peter, and came first to the tomb; and stooping and looking in, he seeth the linen cloths lying; yet entered he not in. Simon Peter therefore also cometh, following him, and entered into the tomb; and he beholdeth the linen cloths lying, and the napkin, that was upon his head, not lying with the linen cloths, but rolled up in a place by itself. Then entered in therefore the other disciple also, which came first to the tomb, and he saw, and believed. For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead. So the disciples went away again unto their own home.—St. John xx. 3-10.

1. THE ARRIVAL OF THE DISCIPLES.

It was natural that St. John should outrun the older Apostle. Not only his age but the more fervid character of his temperament would make this a probable event.

The Magdalen had brought the tidings to them both, so that they started together. Probably they came off immediately, so that there was no time to communicate with the Blessed Virgin before leaving home. Salome, as we know, was absent at the moment.

St. John may have abstained from entering the sepulchre by fear of defilement through contact with the place of death. When Peter had gone in he was ready to follow. The whole narrative is strikingly illustrative of the personal character of the two disciples.

It seems, however, equally naturally and almost

necessarily to set before us a symbolism of the Christian Church. Peter and John represent not only two forms of life, but also represent the Jewish and the Gentile or Catholic manifestations of the Church, the circumcision and the uncircumcision.

St. John arriving first at the grave is the impersonation of human nature in its eager longing for the Redeemer. Mankind hasten to the grave of Christ by religious aspirations. The heart testifies to its need of a Saviour. All the religions of antiquity pointed to the Passion of Christ. Jesus is as it were buried beneath their forms, however distorted the representation may be. Their teachings lead to those vestiges of ancient tradition which told of Him, but in which He could not be found. None of those ordinances could remove the great stone which hid Him from sight. He rose from the dead by a power which those ancient rites could not evoke, nor even explain. Those religions do not avail to effect an entrance for any into the grave of Jesus.

St. Peter enters into the grave. The Jewish covenant provides a teaching respecting the expected Messiah which ought to lead those who believe the Old Testament to enter into the grave and become disciples of the New. As he enters the tomb he beholds the graveclothes lying. When we come to the grave of Jesus we see that the ordinances of the Jewish law are only as graveclothes. The yet unquicken'd Body of Christ was in some manner wrapt up in them, but now He is risen and they are left.

Nevertheless the real apprehension of Christ's resurrection in the fulness of its spiritual power was

not given to the Jewish nation. They had looked forward to Christ as fulfilling in some way both the law and the prophets. But it was with the gaze of wonder, not of spiritual understanding, that they looked to Christ. He was risen and was out of the reach of their scrutiny.

The Gospel must first be preached to the Jews, but upon their repudiation would be given to the Gentiles. So did St. John, the representative of the new covenant of the Catholic Church, enter into the grave and he saw and believed. His faith was of a higher order than the faith of St. Peter. It was not the mere faith in a compulsory law. It was the keensighted faith of inspired love. This is that faith which Jesus as the author of the new covenant will awaken in His people. The Christian Church contemplates the resurrection of Jesus as a Divine mystery. Her heart rises up to the mystery which is exhibited with anticipations akin to the Divine promise. In the fellowship of this mystery she recognises the opened Heaven and the glory of her vocation. Forms as things of earth are empty still, but as the Sacraments of grace they are seen by her not as if they lay upon the ground, but as filled abidingly with the presence of the risen Lord.

O Jesu, let me hasten to Thy tomb. There shall I learn to know Thee all the more truly because my outward eye can no longer see Thee.

My son, hasten to My grave by dying to the world in the power of My grace. Let thy love draw thee more powerfully than any words of

outward law. Yea, let thy love outstrip all law. O blessed love which cannot be satisfied until it has drawn thee to My grave.

Good Lord, shall I come to Thy grave and find Thee gone? Surely if I come to seek Thee now I shall find Thee ever near.

Ah, My son, thou findest Me near by finding Me gone. I am gone from the measures of earth that I may welcome thee with the power of Heaven.

I pause at the gateway of Thy tomb and fear to enter in. I cannot come too near Thee, and yet I tremble at the thought of meeting Thee. Shall I meet Thee or shall I not meet Thee? O my God, either way I tremble. I must pause until Thou have prepared the way.

My son, I ordained the ancient law for this very purpose. That should bring My people to know the truth of My love. There have I set forth in manifold types the heavenly glory of the covenant which was to follow. That law will surely guide thee that thou mayest look into the grave where I have lain, and learn the power of the life wherein I am risen.

Yea, Lord Jesu, Thou hast vouchsafed to subject Thyself to the law for our sakes, and Thou hast freed us from the curse by Thy resurrection. All the gifts of Thy covenant are full of Thy heavenly power. How shall I praise Thee for that which Thou hast done? Raise me out of sin! Raise me out of earth! Raise me out of self! To know that Thou art risen is to know that Thou wilt give me life for ever.

2. THE GRAVECLOTHES.

The force of the allusion to the graveclothes does not seem to be generally felt. We commonly hear them spoken of as if they had been carefully arranged when the Body was gone. Surely this is the very opposite of what the Evangelists intended to express.

How did the sacred Body come out of the graveclothes? We may reverently conceive that it could be only in one way. It came out as a spirit, leaving the graveclothes to fall down when the solid flesh was no longer contained within their folds.

This is what St. John intends when he lays so much stress upon the fact that first St. John and then St. Peter saw the linen clothes 'lying,' i.e. lying flat, although still remaining coiled as when the Body was inside of them which had been swathed therein. St. John saw at first only the wrappings of the lower part of the Body. When St. Peter entered he saw the napkin which was round the sacred head not lying flat as the other clothes were, but standing up with a gaping circle where the throat had been. This napkin stood erect because its circular twist, fastened as it was with a knot in one place, gave it strength to remain erect.

St. Peter saw this arrangement of the clothes from which the Body was gone. He noticed its emptiness. He did not think more about it. How thoroughly true this was to his impulsive but unmeditative

St. John when he went in and saw these things perceived at once that no human power could have taken the Body out of these wrappings and left them as they were. He saw at once that Christ had risen in spiritual power. Therefore it is said, he saw and believed.¹

We may then contemplate the swathing bands lying along the stone in the place where the Body had been, with nothing inside of them now but the spices which Joseph and Nicodemus had placed there. The Body of Jesus is gone. Yet as we look we learn to believe. The Body has passed into a new region of existence. Not only did it leave the tomb while yet the stone lay rolled against the door, but it has left the very linen clothes without disturbing them. The Word was made flesh, and now the flesh has become as Spirit.

O Jesu, Thou hast left these swathing bands, for Thou art risen in the glory of the Father.

These swathing bands, My son, are but the symbol of all earthly things. All things of earth are but the wrappings of the dead. See how I am gone away from them, and rise thou along with Me in spiritual life.

O Lord, indeed I see how empty are all earthly things, for Thou art gone away. O let my heart reach beyond them all in loving desire to be with Thee where now Thou art.

My son, thou must die to the flesh that in the

¹ See Note at end of Meditation.

flesh thou mayest rise according to the power of the Spirit.

O Lord, so let me die that I may know the power of Thy resurrection, being made conformable to Thy death.

8. THE FAITH OF THE BELOVED DISCIPLE.

He saw and believed. Up to this time, if he thought of a resurrection, it was only such a resurrection as that of Lazarus whom he had helped to loose as the strange figure rose with the graveclothes round him. Now he perceives that the resurrection to which Jesus had pointed onward was a resurrection altogether different in kind from that. He perceives that our Lord's manifold teachings respecting the spiritual life of the resurrection were not merely to be interpreted of Divine breathings, but were to express the real and spiritual glory of the very flesh which the Son of God had assumed. Now he rose to the acknowledgment of our Lord's truly Divine Personality when he saw that the flesh in which He had lived upon the earth was taken hence by being taken up into a form of spiritual existence of which it was by nature quite incapable.

O joyous faith! With what a fulness of wonder and transport of delight does he return to the home where the Blessed Mother awaited him. O what tidings he has to tell! The Body has passed out of sight, but whither is it gone? Surely he feels that that sacred Body which has risen into the spiritual glory of the life of God may meet him at any moment.

Life henceforth is a mysterious repose in the Bosom of this sacred Power. 'Jesus was crucified through weakness, but He liveth by the power of God.' It is impossible to speak of Him without the thought that He may hear; impossible to think of Him without a consciousness that He whom space cannot imprison is looking into the heart to see with what thoughts He is acknowledged.

O Jesu, as I contemplate the mystery of Thy resurrection I learn to adore the mystery of Thine incarnation. Thou, the eternal Son of God, hast taken upon Thyself our mortal flesh, and over Thee, the risen Son of Man, death shall no longer have dominion, for Thou art hereby declared to be the Son of God with power.

Yea, My son, and thou must live in the power of My resurrection if thou wouldst die unto the world and become like Myself.

Lord, when I see how Thou art risen I learn how Thou canst truly raise me also with Thyself.

My flesh glorified in spiritual power is the only power whereby any can be raised in newness of life. My resurrection-life is a life unknown before, and none henceforth can know it save by fellowship of bodily union with Myself.

Truly Thou art the Resurrection and the Life. Miserable were any life which could be ours if it were not for the glory of Thy resurrection. Lord, I am content to live and suffer in the world, if only I may learn to die and attain to rise to this new life with Thee.

NOTE to p. 78.

One of the legends of St. Veronica's napkin connects it with the napkin that was wrapped around our Lord's head in the grave. This narrative, when properly explained, seems to furnish a clue to the uprising of such a legend. The napkin round the head may not unlikely have retained some marks of the face, rising to a point over the projection of the nose. Thus the napkin would be spoken of as bearing the marks of our Lord's countenance. This would easily be distorted into the miraculous impression of which the legend speaks; and nothing was more natural than for the napkin which specially brought home to the beloved disciple the truth of the resurrection to be itself remembered and treasured in that connection.

The manner in which the graveclothes were left was first brought before my attention in a tract by the Rev. A. Beard, M.A., Rector of Great Greenford. The more ordinary view that they were carefully folded up involves a miracle of a character which is almost ridiculous if one attempts to realise the process, and which is utterly without foundation in the words of the Evangelist. The graveclothes are not said to have been folded. Stress is laid upon their 'lying,' *i.e.* they were fallen flat. The napkin was twisted, as of course it had been, and for this reason it stood upright and did not fall like the heavier wrappings of the body. It was 'twisted into one place,' *i.e.* so as to be held firm by a knot in one place. It was not miraculously carried into another place. The 'one place' of the Evangelist cannot be explained if the ordinary view is maintained. 'One place' is not 'another place.' The ordinary explanation requires the place of the napkin to be distinguished from the place of the linen clothes. It gives no force to the word 'one' which occurs in the Greek. The 'one place' of the knot held all together.

MEDITATION IX.

The Galilean Women.

But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they came unto the tomb, bringing the spices which they had prepared. And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb. And they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus. And it came to pass, while they were perplexed thereabout, behold, two men stood by them in dazzling apparel: and as they were affrighted, and bowed down their faces to the earth, they said unto them, Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen: remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee, saying that the Son of man must be delivered up into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again. And they remembered his words, and returned from the tomb, and told all these things to the eleven, and to all the rest. Now they were Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James: and the other women with them: told these things unto the apostles. And these words appeared in their sight as idle talk; and they disbelieved them.—St. Luke xxiv. 1-11.

1. THE WOMEN FROM GALILEE.

SOON after Peter and John had left the sepulchre the women of Galilee seem to have arrived. They brought with them the spices which they had been purchasing on Friday evening. How little did they know of the great events which had happened at the sepulchre during the interval!

They had listened to our Lord's teaching: they had witnessed His miracles: they had ministered to Him of their substance during his life. Now they come for the last act of ministration which they can render Him, but the grave is to be to them a place of greater miracles than any which they have witnessed before, and the teaching of His earthly ministry is to be perfected in the fulness of a heavenly power which they had never previously known.

The stone was rolled away. How this had been done they knew not. The Body of Jesus was gone. Whether the graveclothes were lying there still we cannot say. The beloved disciple may very probably have taken, at any rate, the napkin that was round His head, knotted as it was, to the Blessed Mother at his own home, to testify to the mystery of the resurrection. It seems probable that if the graveclothes had been there the women would have noticed them, for there was nothing of a supernatural character to terrify or bewilder them as there had been when the previous company of women arrived and saw the angel seated on the stone. Mary and Salome in their fear had hurried away, and indeed one reason for the appearance of the angel to them at their first arrival may have been to prevent their curiously handling and disturbing the graveclothes, for if they had done this, which would be quite likely for them to do, the position of the wrappings would have been disturbed so that there would have been nothing by which the beloved disciple should have been led onward to appreciate, not for himself only but for all the Church, the spiritual glory into which Jesus was now exalted.

O Jesu, open Thou my understanding that I may rejoice to contemplate Thy Divine love ordering wisely all the things of earth, although there may be no outward evidence of aught beyond the reach of human power.

My son, be sure that while earthly things are happening as if by the mere power of

natural causes, I am near at hand ruling over all, and making all things minister to the necessities of My body and the wellbeing of My people.

Lord Jesu, too often it seems to me as if this could not be.

Fear not, My son, thou seemest to lose Me but I am not lost. Thou must lose Me from the sphere of thy natural perception if thou wouldst truly rise to the glory of My heavenly life.

O Lord Jesu, I cannot lose Thee because Thou enterest into Thy glory, for Thou goest up on high even for my sake, that Thou mayest help me with a greater power unseen than sight can know.

My son, thou seest not Me, but I see thee, and see not only what thou art but all that thou needest, and I will help thee with an unfailing care.

Blessed Jesu, I can repose in Thy care with greater confidence than in anything which I can perceive or do for mine own self. Unseen Thou watchest over me. By unseen agencies Thou art ever protecting me. From unseen dangers Thou preservest me. The unseen future is present to Thy sight, and Thou orderest all things with a view to that which no human wisdom could arrange. The visible powers of nature obey Thee. Thee, yet unseen, I love. Would that I loved Thee more worthily. Though now I see Thee not, yet believing in Thee I rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

2. THE TWO ANGELS APPEAR.

The women seem to have commenced a search in the neighbourhood to see if the Body of Jesus had been taken out and thrown away. As they did so two men stood over them as to stop them. The same word is used by St. Luke in this place which he uses elsewhere in narrating how the high priests and scribes and elders met our Blessed Lord to stop Him when He was teaching in the Temple (xx. 1). They came to stop the women from their perplexed search, and this vision must be distinguished from that of St. Mary Magdalene, whose intensely loving sorrow was suited to find better comfort in the repose of the heavenly messengers seated within the grave.

These Galilean women were amazed at the sight of two men in shining raiment. It does not appear that they immediately knew them to be angels. Their thoughts were absorbed in earthly considerations. Although they had found the tomb of Jesus empty, they had not followed Him onward into the new life as St. John had done. They were not bound to the Body of Jesus by an entrancing love such as made the Magdalen feel that it was the only thing in the world necessary for her joy. These women had been used to minister to the outward wants of Jesus during His earthly life, and they were now come to minister to His dead Body. Their chief thought probably was a thought of anxiety how they could pay to Him those reverent attentions which remained

due. This being done they would contentedly leave Him among the dead.

The women met the strangers with a lowly reverence full of fear, but not becoming conscious of the other world which shone upon them from those dazzling forms. We must of course remember that they had not as yet heard of the appearance of the angel who rolled away the stone and sat upon it, to welcome Mary and Salome.

The angel rebukes them. 'Why seek ye the living one among the corpses?' That they should come to the tomb where they had seen Him laid was natural enough. That they should be looking for Him round about instead of rising to the consciousness of His resurrection, implied slowness of understanding. They ought to have known Him as the Living One, and they ought to have perceived that His abode in the grave was but for a time. 'He is not here, but is risen: remember how He spake unto you when He was yet in Galilee, saying that the Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men and be crucified, and the third day rise again.'

The women accepted the rebuke, for 'they remembered His words.' They did well to be seeking Jesus, but how little did they know of Jesus whom they were seeking if they thought that the pit could shut her mouth upon Him. They were showing their natural love, but their natural blindness also. That blindness, however, was not the blindness of stubborn unbelief, but of natural imperfection. Consequently they rose out of it when reproved.

Our life must be a growing development. What we learn anew of Christ must be the true outcome of what we have already learnt. The highest truths to which we can be led must be recognised by us as a part of our most elementary teaching. So do we go from strength to strength, with love more enlightened, but still the same true love which has been our life from the beginning.

O Jesu, draw my heart to seek Thee as my only life.

Consider, My son, why it is that I hide Myself from thee. I would have thee seek Me because thou feelest the loss of Me.

Yea, Lord, and open Thou mine eyes to look into the mysteries of Thy kingdom, that there I may seek for Thee, the Lord of life.

Even so, My son, come up hither and seek for Me.

O Lord, Thou drawest me upward to Thy glory by the very loss which makes me seek Thee more.

Even so, My son, I desire to raise thee to be with Myself, and thy heart must be lifted up to Me if thou thyself wouldst come to dwell with Me.

Lord, when I find Thee not, how shall I learn to rise towards Thee?

Thou must remember what I said to thee when I was yet with thee in the land of the shadow of death. My words are full of promises that cannot fail. Look not for me amidst the

corruptions of a dead world, but in the words of promise which I have spoken.

Would that I had an angel ever present to remind me !

Thou needest not an angel, for I have given My Holy Spirit to bring to thy remembrance all things that I have spoken, and if thou livest in the truth of My holy Church thou shalt assuredly have the voice of the Spirit ever calling thee. The Spirit and the Bride say come.

Yea, Lord, Thy word endureth for ever, and when it goeth forth it giveth understanding to the simple. O let me seek Thee ever until I find Thee in the fullness of Thy life. Let Thy word lead me onward through the manifold changes of the darkness until Thy word is fulfilled in the perfect communication of Thine own eternal light.

8. THE REPORT OF THE WOMEN TO THE ASSEMBLED DISCIPLES.

St. Luke seems to mention Mary Magdalene, Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, not as forming one party, but as being the chief personages in their distinct visitations. Mary Magdalene had told Peter and John, and there is a special message from our risen Lord Himself which she will have to fulfil before the morning is far advanced. The other Mary has already gone to the assembled company, having seen the angel sitting on the stone outside the tomb. Joanna and these Galilean women are now sent to

corroborate their tidings. The value of their testimony will be all the greater to the assembled community because what they report is substantially the same, but yet in itself entirely distinct.

Meanwhile also Peter and John have come from the sepulchre bringing the tidings of the resurrection, and possibly the very graveclothes which were left. They, however, had had no visions of angels. All the surroundings, as they saw them, were of the simple natural order, yet they had come to a higher knowledge of what the resurrection meant than the women possessed. The women had the visions of angels, but not so clear a perception of the spiritual character of the event.

Their words seemed as idle tales. The supernatural appearance of the angels did not form a part of the highest manifestation such as the Apostles had. We are not to measure the dignity or truth of a revelation or communication from God by the supernatural phenomena attendant upon it, as if something were wanting unless such marvels were vouchsafed. Neither again are we to doubt the reality of certain miraculous phenomena because they are given to lower stages of faith and not given to the more advanced. God will deal with us according to our need, and He may be leading us to the higher perception of His truth by withholding what is manifestly supernatural. He wants to lead us to Himself, that we may not be seeking the living among the dead, but with angels and archangels may rise to contemplate His glory.

Think of the company of the faithful assembled

together on that Easter morning, as one after another came in with tidings from the tomb.

In all probability they did not even know as yet that the Jews had set their watch during the night, to be so soon driven away by the angel's descent.

They felt, however, that the crust of earth had been strangely broken for them. They felt themselves within the influence of an entirely new world. They would recall the solemn words with which our Blessed Lord had quitted the Temple. It seemed as if old things were passed away and all things were made new. Nor were such thoughts without foundation. That morning had witnessed the great change. Centuries would elapse without witnessing any change that could compare with it. The whole course of the world's future history would be nothing more than the gradual development in manifestation of what was then in one moment accomplished.

Do we realise the marvel of the changed world into which we have been admitted? The flitting visions of angels are but a subordinate and transitory feature of the change. The truth of the risen life into which Christ has entered brings us into it as members of Himself: this is the eternal reality, by the possession of which we are separated for ever from the world of nature into which we were born.

Angels, seen or unseen, are round about us continually, ministering spirits sent forth to wait upon the heirs of salvation, and Jesus, the Lord of angels, is risen from the dead now no more to die. In Him we have died unto the world. In Him we are alive for ever.

O Jesu, how can I praise Thee for the glory of Thy resurrection? Grant me the joyful experience of Thy risen life.

Abide in Me, My son, and let My words abide in thee. So shalt thou attain in the fullness of time to know what I would teach thee.

O Lord, I seem to belong to the world. All goes on around me as it did. Can it then be true that Thou hast called me out of the world?

Yea, My son, measure not the change of thy life by any appearance of things around thee. I have called thee to live with Myself.

O gracious Lord, therefore am I come into the priesthood, therefore have entered into Religion, even that I might know Thee more truly than I could know Thee, living as the men of the world live round about me.

See, then, My son, that thou lift up thy heart to understand the mysteries of the new life. Think not to see them written upon the outward scroll of nature. Close thine eyes to all that thou canst see, and let thine heart keep My commandments. Do that which I bid thee, and thou shalt find the power of the new life which I give thee.

O Lord Jesu, blessed be Thy great and holy name. How little do I know of the new world whereinto Thou hast called me. Nevertheless here let me abide, for I have a delight therein. Sweet are Thy words to hear, and sweet Thy promises to accept, and sweet Thy gifts whereby Thou enticest me, and sweet Thy discipline whereby Thy power is felt, yea,

sweet the very loss of Thee, because I look therein to find Thee more fully ere long, and sweet the progress of knowledge whereby Thou dost reveal Thyself within me, and sweet the aspirations which Thy love awakens to make me long for Thee more truly. But oh ! the ineffable sweetness of the welcome which Thou hast in store, the manifestation wherein Thou shalt be fully known, the transport whereby I shall be perfected in the fellowship and likeness and life of Thine eternal loveliness ! O Lord Jesu, how true are those Thy gifts which to the worldly heart seem nought but idle tales. O let me fix my heart on Thee, and be for ever dead to the world in the joy of Thine everliving love.

MEDITATION X.

Rabboni.

Now when he was risen early on the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, from whom he had cast out seven devils. She went and told them that had been with him, as they mourned and wept. And they, when they heard that he was alive, and had been seen of her, disbelieved.—St. Mark xvi. 9-11.

But Mary was standing without at the tomb weeping: so, as she wept, she stooped and looked into the tomb; and she beheldeth two angels in white sitting, one at the head, and one at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him. When she had thus said, she turned herself back, and beholdeth Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou hast borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away. Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turneth herself, and saith unto him in Hebrew, Rabboni; which is to say, Master. Jesus saith to her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended unto the Father: but go unto my brethren, and say to them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and my God and your God. Mary Magdalene cometh and telleth the disciples, I have seen the Lord; and how that he had said these things unto her.—St. John xx. 11-18.

1. MARY AT THE TOMB.

We now come to a new era in the history of the resurrection. Jesus Himself appears.

Mary Magdalene had probably come back from the house along with Peter and John, but they might naturally outrun her and arrive at the tomb some time before she could reach it. Perhaps she stayed somewhat, in order to tell the Blessed Mother.

Or again, she may have gone from the house of St. John to the place where the rest of the disciples seem to have been more numerous assembled. The Apostles had come and gone. The Galilean women had arrived. Probably they had gone away also. Neither of these visits lasted long. Mary came near, as one in a dream, full of mournful love. She can turn nowhere else, though she knows that the grave is empty. It is the last place where she can think of her Lord. That is enough.

See her standing by the door of the sepulchre, stooping to look in. Two angels are there in white apparel, one at the head the other at the feet, where the Body of Jesus had lain. Her sorrow is too great to be disturbed by wonder. She gazes upon them with vacancy. This fixt gaze is what the word implies which St. John uses. It was a gaze void of thought by the very intensity of thought. The fulness of the mind made the eye blind to all around.

The angels break the silence. 'Woman, why weepest thou?' Asking such a question showed they could not help her in her need. They could know nothing of the Body which had been taken away if they could sit there and doubt as to the cause of her sorrow. The question, however, roused her to consciousness. She turned from the sepulchre to the garden.

There was a form there which immediately caught her eye. Again she fell to gazing. She thought it was the gardener. Yet there was something in the stranger's look which brought back wondrous

memories into living power. She stood and gazed on Him.

The angel's question is now repeated, but with a word of addition. 'Woman, why weepest thou? Whom seekest thou?'

It is plain that the one unknown knows something of her trouble. He knows that she is looking for a body in the grave. She wakes to hope that He can tell her where it is. O that she might once more see that loved form, and render the funereal homage which she desired!

Intently was she gazing to have her fond inquiry satisfied. Where shall she go to fetch away the treasure of her heart?

'Jesus saith unto her, Mary.'

Now that strange form finds life before her eyes and gives life to her heart. No wonder that her eyes were fixed when first she saw Him! That voice which speaks her name as oft before, makes known the truth. Now, full of energy, she turns to Him. There is no need of further search. She falls at his feet, and says 'Rabboni.'

O Jesu, Thou art my teacher. All the world is but as an empty sepulchre unless Thou speak to me.

O My son, if I see that thou art truly desiring to find Me, I will come and show Myself to thee. If any seek Me in vain, it is because I am proving them whether they will be satisfied with any visions short of Myself.

O Lord, no angels can know the anguish of my heart when I find Thee not, nay, nor the joy which

fills me when I hear Thy loving voice. Truly to hear Thee calling me by name is life from the dead. In losing Thee I die, and in Thy love I live.

O My son, can that love cease? Surely thou shouldst know that I love thee always, and in My changeless love thou shouldst find a life more sure than any which can belong to thine own uncertain consciousness.

Yea, Lord, I live because Thou ever lovest me. This is eternal life. Thou knowest me, and my knowledge of Thee is but the reflection of Thine own true knowledge wherewith Thou hast first known me.

Learn thou to know Me ever near, even though thou seest Me not. Others may need the words of angels to admonish them of that which I have spoken. Let My words abide in thy heart, and so continue thou in My love. My word can never fail. O let the failure of outward things make thee rely the more simply on that which I have spoken. Neither life nor death can separate Me from thee nor thee from Me.

O Lord, Thy love is stronger than death. Hold thou me up. I am Thine, O save me! Thou hast conquered every other enemy. I can fear nothing round about me any longer. Save me from myself, that I perish not by losing my hold of Thee. Thou art my teacher. Teach me more and more of the mysteries of Thy Divine love, that I may rejoice in all that Thou doest for me, and that I may never do aught save that which shall glorify Thee.

2. TOUCH ME NOT.

These words are not to prevent the touch of faith, but the outward grasp which refuses perfect faith. 'Hold me not.'

The touch of Jesus is the sweet joy of the faithful, but we must not think Him less near because we cannot feel His Presence. He will hold us up if we do not try to hold Him down.

In truth, if we would touch Jesus in the resurrection-life, it must be with the sympathy of the Ascension. He belongs no more to earth, nor can the heart which clings to earth find any part in Him. We cannot claim Him as ours, save by giving ourselves up to be wholly His. We must belong to Him in the bonds of the life beyond the grave. They are eternal and cannot perish. He is no longer bound by bonds of earth. If we try thus to hold Him, we lose the very power by which alone He can be held. We cannot hold Jesus unless we are dead to earth even as He is.

How great was the privilege thus to have been the first to see the risen Saviour! The penitent soul must own that Saviour as a sovereign. Henceforth must the soul which has seen Jesus live for Jesus. The vision of Jesus is not given merely to soothe the sorrow of the penitent with a renewal of previous intimacy. We must know the Lord in the Majesty of His ascended glory as the King of Saints. The individuality of love wherewith we delight in Him must not destroy the large-hearted-

ness of sympathy wherewith we rejoice as members of His Body in the communion of saints. In Christ no man liveth to himself. We must know the power of His resurrection in the universality of His comprehensive love. Otherwise we destroy its value for ourselves. We must not seek so to hold Jesus as to bind Him to our littleness. We must die to our own littleness and rise to Him if we would have Him hold us up in the glory of His triumph.

O Jesu, Thou wilt not reject the touch of any who seek to be led onward to the vision of Thy love.

Let My touch lead thee onward to the glory of the Father. Suffer not thyself to be drawn back to the remembrance of earthly companionship. The Divine glory whither I ascend was the principle of blessing which made My earthly life worthy of thy love. The life that is to be hereafter gains not any charm from that which went before. It was itself the power whereby My earthly acts were wrought in glory even in the world of My humiliation.

O that all my senses were transfigured, so that I might lay hold upon Thee in that true fellowship of glory whereunto Thou art risen.

Thou must discipline all thy faculties to die to every earthly thought. So shalt thou find the powers of the heavenly life aroused within thee. None can follow Me to lay hold on Me but those who have died with Me to that world which I have left.

O my Jesu, art thou not come nearer to me by Thy return from the grave?

My son, I am not come nearer to thee, but I call thee to be nearer to Me in the power of My resurrection which I would have thee share. I cannot come again into the world of death until I come to destroy by My appearance in glory the power of death which holds it back from Me.

O Jesu, how can I worthily praise Thee now while I contemplate the beginning of Thy triumph? With the penitent let me fall down before Thee now in Thy resurrection to seek Thy grace, that I may have my portion with Thy saints in the day of Thy glorious appearing.

8. THE MISSION TO THE BRETHREN.

The penitent is charged with the first mission from the risen Lord, as she was the first to behold Him. She has to announce not only the resurrection. Angels had charged the other women with this announcement. She is to tell them of the Ascension. Of this she is to speak as no longer a future event, but an exaltation of His nature that was already begun. 'I am ascending.' His appearances upon the earth were not in any sense a return to earth. He had entered the grave by the doorway which opened into it from earthly surroundings. He had left the grave by the mystical doorway of the spiritual life, passing onward through it to the Life which is beyond, a Life which was to go on developing until He was seated at the Right Hand of the Father.

We must not think of the Resurrection-Life as if it were a completed Life. It is but the beginning of the Ascension. So with ourselves also, our resurrection in Baptism along with Christ is not a completed state. It is to be developed in glory along with Jesus. Those who are thus risen with Him must seek the things which are above, that they may continually in heart and mind ascend whither He is gone before, and by the disciplinary exercise of His grace may experience the transforming power of His Ascension, as they are changed from glory to glory by the Spirit of the Lord.

‘He to whom I ascend is your Father as well as Mine, yours because Mine, yours in Me, yours therefore while you abide in Me and ascend to seek Him along with Me.’ Such is the purport of our Lord’s message, a message whose power lasts from age to age. We must be ascending along with Him or we cannot be really subject to the influence of His Life. ‘If ye loved Me ye would rejoice because I said I go unto the Father,’ and if ye know Him to be your Father, ye must be striving to follow along with Me.

Sonship to God involves the consecration of the whole nature to God. The consecration effected by our voluntary co-operation on earth involves the ascension of the whole nature to become perfectly identified with the action of the Divine Nature as soon as the impediments of our earthly surroundings are removed.

As the stone rests on its centre of gravity, so the regenerate soul rests upon God. Even in seeking

for God we seek for Him as having found Him, and experiencing the powerful attraction of His Divine will. God draws us towards Himself, and in yielding ourselves to the law of that power which holds us, we are acting true to the new nature which we have received. The soul gravitates upwards to God by the power of the unifying Spirit. We are drawn towards God as a result of being substantially united with Him. The consciousness of having attained to this absorbing unity is the joy of the soul throughout eternity, and our whole life upon earth ought to be an increasing participation in this joyous consciousness of the Divine Life, a Life above ourselves, yet given to us that it may be ours, and drawing us upward that we may lose ourselves in it.

O Jesu, ascended now to the Right Hand of the Father, draw our hearts in union with Thyself that we may always remember the purpose wherefore Thou hast raised us out of our natural estate, even to abide with Thee in the glory of the eternal kingdom.

If thou wouldst ascend along with Me, thou must look steadfastly upward after Me. Look not behind thee to any of the things of earth, however much they may allure thee. If thou findest pleasure in that which thou leavest, thou canst not learn the joy of what is yet in store.

O Jesu, I desire to follow Thee with an undivided heart. As Thou hast been pleased to call me out of the world, that setting all earthly things aside I might follow Thee alone, fill my heart

with Thy perfect joy, that I may increasingly delight in the vocation which Thou hast given me.

O My son, consider well the dignity of that Divine sonship in which I have called thee to share. O with what loving joy must the son of the Eternal Father press forward to claim the glory of his inheritance! So have I pressed forward. So must thou follow Me.

Yea, Lord, I will endeavour to follow Thee in the power of that new life which Thou hast given me. How can I seek the things of earth when Thou hast given me the things of heaven for mine eternal portion? Nay, let me cast all earthly things aside that I may enjoy Thy heavenly treasures with unmixed delight. I know myself to be living with Thy life while I experience the increasing joy of Thy changeless love. Oh, as I continue in Thy love, let me find continually its sweet power shining out more and more within my heart, that in its brightness I may rise unto Thyself and be accepted of Thee in the fulness of the Father's benediction.

MEDITATION XI.

: Appearance of Jesus to the Women.

behold, Jesus met them,¹ saying, I. And they came and took hold of him, and worshipped him. Then Jesus said unto them, Fear not: go tell them that they depart into Galilee, there shall they see me.—St. Luke xxiv. 34, 36.

Moreover certain women of our company amazed us, having been early at the tomb; and when they found not his body, they came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels, which said that he was alive. And certain of them that were with us went to the tomb, and found it even so as the women had said: but him they saw not.—St. Luke xxiv. 22-24.

1. THEIR RETURN TO THE TOMB.

Myrra and Salome had come to the assembled disciples with the message of the angel who rolled away the stone. Joanna and her companions had followed them afterwards with an account of their search for Jesus, in which the two men in dazzling apparel reproved them for seeking the living among the dead. Finally, Mary Magdalene had arrived with the message of a still more interesting kind. Jesus was not only risen, so that they might expect to see Him in Galilee, but He was near them even now. He had appeared to her and charged her with the message to their company of a still more solemn and stimulating kind than any which had yet been given. He is not only to meet them as of old in Galilee, but they must look upon His visitation as a

¹ See Note at end of Meditation.

transitional manifestation. He is risen from the dead not for the purpose of abiding here below, but so as to be on a heavenly progress, ascending to the Father, and though He is thus entered into His glory He is not ashamed to call them brethren, but requires them to recognise His own Father as being their Father also, so that they may abide with Him in the newness of life which is henceforth to be made known.

Such tidings might well stir the hearts of the disciples. The tomb, though empty, would be felt by them to be a centre of power, a wellspring of life, because it had ceased to be the prison-house of death.

Who could turn from such thoughts to the ordinary things of earth? Surely this is the Lord's day, and no other thought can occupy the mind but the thought of Him, the living Lord!

How true such thoughts were! More true than they who thought them could possibly know! That empty tomb was to be a wellspring of regeneration to all the nations of the earth. Jesus was to fill His tomb with a flooding stream of illuminating grace by which the world should be quickened into a participation of that Life which was His own, yea, rather, that Life which was Himself.

None could know that life but through that tomb. Those who would know it must come there to seek it, there to be buried with Him by Baptism into death, that they might henceforth walk in newness of life.

When they heard the strange and joyful news, how eagerly would they go to that tomb, hoping that as Mary Magdalene had seen, they might see also.

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The women returned hoping for a sight which should outshine that which they had already seen, a sight dearer to their hearts than that of angels.

Others also went to make sure for themselves of the wondrous news which these women had brought. So did the consciousness of the resurrection begin to burst upon them. The various reports did indeed corroborate one another, so as scarcely to allow of any doubt. Nevertheless they seemed to some of them even now as idle tales. We must remember what an extraordinary event it was which they were required now to believe for the first time. We who have lived all our lives perhaps in a certain, though probably very inadequate, acknowledgment of it, can form little idea of what it must have been to have such things told respecting one whom they had seen a few hours ago hanging dead on the Cross.

Some then, we may well believe, thought it was of no use to attend to such unlikely things. They went to their business in the city with hearts saddened by the loss of Jesus, instead of exulting in the resurrection which proclaimed Him as the Christ.

Even those who went to the tomb went doubtfully, to see if the women's report were true. 'They found it even so as the women had said, but Him they saw not' (St. Luke xxiv. 24). The doubting heart must not expect to see Jesus. He shows Himself not that He may satisfy intellectual doubts, but that He may cheer with holy light the longings of supernatural love.

The joy of expectation with which the women returned was greater than even the joy of surprise

with which they had come away from the sepulchre. 'And behold Jesus met them, saying All hail.'

O Jesu, let me ever seek Thee with that holy love which may enable me to see Thee. I long to see Thee in the glory of Thy resurrection. The highest visions of earth are nothing, for Thou art past away from them. No longer can they even reflect Thy Light. Thy Light is the Light of another world, and in Thy Light I long to see that Light of that other world. O Thou true Light of Light, prepare my soul in love unto Thyself that I may see Thyself, who art my Life, my Light, my Love !

Some thou, My son, even as those women came to the tomb. They knew its emptiness, but they longed to share My fulness. So come thou into the life of Religion, not as if thou wouldst there find any earthly gifts whereon to repose, but that thou mayest in deadness to the world behold the glory of My hidden life, to live thereby.

O Jesu, Thy grave shall be my home.

Yea, My son, henceforth must thou be detached from all that is of earth. The stones and the buildings of the earthly Temple are nothing to thee. In the rock of My tomb is laid the foundation of that new Temple wherein I have called thee to dwell. There must thou minister to Me whilst I am building My stories in the heavens.

O Lord, surely Thou hast brought for us water out of the rock, even that life-giving flood whereon

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Thou hast founded the new earth, the habitation of righteousness.

Rise up, My son, and let the grace of My sepulchre be to thee indeed as the flood of Noah separating thee from all the world that thou hast known before. Thou art past out of the old world, even out of that earthly Jerusalem, which rejoiced to expect Me. Now look forward through the fellowship of My grave to behold Me as in Galilee, while I ascend unto the Father, for the whole world lieth in darkness and in the shadow of death, and thou must be looking upward with heavenly aspirations. Abide with Me in the grave, and if thou seest Me it shall be well with thee, but if thou seest Me not, fear not, for thou shalt see Me in Galilee if thou wilt persevere. I show not Myself in the revelations of contemplative life to every soul even of those that love Me. When I call thee to go forth in the ministry of active love, thou shalt see Me at the appointed time. Yet must thou first of all learn in thine own self to be patient in confiding love. So shalt thou see Me. The vision will come at the appointed time to those who wait for it.

O Jesu, shall not I wait with thankfulness even though life in the world be weary? O when I think that I see Thee not, moments seem to be changed into an eternity of despair, but when I remember that though I see Thee not, Thou seest me, then these very moments are filled with the consciousness of Thy love, and they seem as nothing by reason of the brightness

of the vision for which my soul longs. O come ! But Thou art come ! O come and show Thyself ! O that mine eyes could weep away my earthly nature in a flood of tears, so that the reality of Thy spiritual truth might be made manifest to me, and in me, and by me. To see Thee is to live in Thee, and to live in Thee is to make Thee known. O Jesu, Jesu, in Thy death I see my nothingness which Thou hast taken upon Thyself, and in my nothingness I see Thy glory which Thou givest me.

2. WORSHIPPING JESUS.

‘ They took hold of His feet and worshipped Him.’ Mary was not allowed to grasp Him with that grasp of natural delight with which she would have welcomed Him when she first saw Him risen. She was now probably along with those women to whom Jesus showed Himself when He permitted them to take hold of His feet and worship Him. She had gone away contentedly at His bidding to tell the disciples of the glorious truth, and in the self-abnegation of that ministry she had learnt to rise from earthly thoughts to heavenly. So does the soul learn spiritual truth even now most surely by teaching others. So must we, in all ministries of Mission life, seek to ascend ourselves to the knowledge of that ascended Lord of whom we speak. Though she had had a knowledge of Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth she will know Him with the glorious knowledge of the Spirit of Truth.

Thus could these women lay hold of His feet and

THE APPEARANCE OF JESUS TO THE WOMEN. 109

worship Him. The transport of earthly delight had died away from their heart. The calmness of heavenly joy filled them with the pure ecstasy of Divine love.

They took hold of His feet. Now that Jesus is risen we may take hold of His feet, whereby he walks as it were upon the earth. Those feet which St. John afterwards saw as fine brass burning in a furnace (Rev. i, 15) are His Church upon the earth. Twofold is the manifestation, His people and His Sacraments. By these we may still lay hold of Jesus.

We may. We must. It were of no use for us to know the resurrection of Jesus in a spirit of intellectual pride. If we do not hold the Feet, we cannot hold the Head. As we hold the Feet, we are indeed made one with Him. The virtue which is in Him comes forth from Him and quickens us in Him with that Life which He Himself is to all who come to Him. His Divine Person is the Head from whom the whole Body increaseth with the increase of God.

O Jesu, wonderful is Thy goodness, Who in the beginning didst create me that I might serve Thee, and even now in the glory of Thy resurrection wouldst create me anew that I may serve Thee in the glory of Thy manifested life. Thou callest me to minister to Thee in sacramental contemplation and in active philanthropy. Grant that I may never forget Thee, nor leave Thee, nor weary of Thee, nor desire aught but that which is to be found in Thee, nor doubt the fulness of Thy love according to the specialty of the

*vocation which Thou givest me. O let Thy
penetrate me while I touch Thee, and Thy li
form me to Thyself while I obey Thee, an
Passion purify me from all that is not of
while I suffer for Thee, and Thy love sanctif
that I may manifest Thy glory while I die to
and may know Thee as my only life !*

*Yea, My son, thus must thou lay !
Me. Then shalt thou take for thyself
that eternal life whereunto thou hast been
even as in thy Baptism, thine Ordinance
Religious profession, thou hast witness
good confession in the sight of many wil
(1 Tim. vi. 13, 19.)*

*O Jesu, henceforth Thy grave shall be my
Surely Thou hast made the place of Thy res
glorious (Is. xi. 10). That is no home where t
alone is found. Whatever happen to me in th
my home is where Thou art with the Fati
thence is my life, there is my treasure, thither
heart's desire. My heart's desire is unto Th
and to the remembrance of Thee (Is. xxvi.
sweet Jesu, draw me unto Thyself that I n
henceforth in Thy love.*

8. THE COMMISSION.

As these women worshipped Him, wh
mingled with their joy ! Although their hear
ready to believe, yet they needed the gift
Holy Ghost to enable them perfectly to enter i
glory of the new life which shone around the

THE APPEARANCE OF JESUS TO THE WOMEN. 111

Blessed fear which is the beginning of wisdom !
Blessed fear which called forth the voice of Jesus to
give comfort ! In this fear all that is of earth dies
out, and the command no more to fear is as an act of
creative power calling onward to the joy of a new life.

They had come hoping to see, but the vision was
more than they had hoped for. Suddenly He stands
before them. They see Him not as Mary had seen
Him before, when He seemed to be engaged in the
work of earth. We must suppose that the vision of
Him came before their eyes, meeting them not as
one walking from a distant spot, but with instantane-
ous nearness of presence, where but the moment
before there had been nothing to see.

He came to meet them, coming from the spiritual
world to meet them in the pilgrimage of faith and
hope and love. He stood before them, so that at His
appearance they could not but tremble.

His voice, as He says ' All hail ' shows that it
is no dream. His feet meet their touch with the
sense of solidity, as His form meets their eye with the
sense of identity, and His voice meets their ear with
the sense of living energy.

What a strange Presence is this ! Strange not
because the thing is strange on which they gaze, but
because that on which they gaze is what they have
so well known before, but now they meet it in a
manner that is altogether new. The preserved
identity makes the new power more strange. It does
not destroy the newness of this meeting with Jesus.
It makes it but the more profoundly felt.

To meet with Jesus is to receive a charge from

Him. He never meets any without calling them to some work of love. The contemplative life must die out in idleness, otherwise the sight of Jesus be lost therein. The active life must be a charism given by Him, not a mere exercise of natural powers, otherwise it will fail to live with the power of the risen glory.

The women were charged to tell His brethren that they all should see Him in Galilee.

Their hearts draw them to the tomb in proportion to the reality of their faith, but there was a word from Jesus which must draw them even away from the outward tomb. They were not to rely upon their own experiences nor upon those of others. They who could claim to be His brethren must go to Galilee to see Him, as He had told them before.

This is the third time that the charge is given to them to meet Him in Galilee, twice by the angels and now by Himself.

There were indeed to be various manifestations vouchsafed in Jerusalem, but they would be for special purposes, according to His will. The promise and we may therefore pretty confidently suppose the time, of a collective meeting with His people had been already announced to them, and they must suppose that any previous interviews were intended to supersede what He had once promised and joined.

O how great is the joy of being charged to bring any to Jesus. When Jesus announces that He will meet with us, we must not suppose the meeting is to be immediate. We must not ha-

THE APPEARANCE OF JESUS TO THE WOMEN. 113

Tarry the Lord's leisure. Calm times of waiting strengthen the heart to experience the reality of the fruition which is to follow. So must it be with us. 'Truly my soul waiteth in stillness upon the Lord, for of Him cometh my salvation.'

O Jesu, blessed be Thy name for the call which Thou hast given.

Take heed, My son, that thou walk worthy thereof.

O Jesu, if I fulfil Thy bidding I know that Thou wilt also fulfil to me Thy promises. While I serve Thee I attain to behold Thee, and the sight of Thee shines out within my soul only while I am attentive to do that which Thou hast bidden.

So must it be. My presence is a presence of power, and only those who use My power can know it. My presence is a presence of love, and only those who exercise My love can use it. My presence is a presence of sovereignty, and only those who obey My word can exercise My power.

O Lord Jesu, let Thy word of love ring through whole nature with its sovereign majesty of power. Blessed power of grace, which fashions me after Thine own likeness while Thou dost operate through my infirmities. O let me always rejoice in the power of Thy resurrection, that in Thy love I may abide to all eternity. O never let me swerve from a ready acceptance of Thy call, lest Thy love be manifested against me in the eternity of Thy judgment. O let me, Lord, that I may die to the world. O

go forth with me whithersoever I go in the world ruling me, sustaining me, sanctifying me, that I may behold Thee with joy, having my portion in the heavenly city. Blessed is he of whom when Thou comest again Thou shalt be able to say that he was born there.

NOTE to p. 103.

The Authorised Version reads 'And [as they went to his disciples] Jesus met them.' The words in brackets seem to be an interpolation. They involve the narrative in much difficulty, which would of itself be no reason for rejection but also they are rejected as spurious by the most recent critical investigation of the text. Their insertion by a copyist who did not understand the break in the narrative might easily happen. It seems that Jesus did not meet them when they went, but that they were returning after the fulfilment of their mission when He met them: He would not be likely to meet them simply for the purpose of repeating to them the charge which the angel had given. His repetition of the charge when his own appearance might have seemed to nullify it is perfectly natural, that the disciples might be fully assured of its continuing in force for them.

MEDITATION XII.

Our Lord's Appearance to St. Peter.

But Peter arose, and ran unto the tomb; and stooping and looking in, he seeth the linen cloths by themselves; and he departed to his home, wondering at that which was come to pass.—St. Luke xxiv. 12.¹

1. ST. PETER'S RETURN TO THE TOMB.

APPARENTLY the visit of St. Peter to the tomb which St. Luke records was a result of the tidings which the women brought respecting the visions of angels which they had had there. We must consequently distinguish it from his visit with St. John, although St. Luke mentions his seeing the linen clothes, which probably has reference to that earlier one. It was not of importance to the Evangelist's narrative to state when he saw the clothes in the tomb. They constituted an important element of his inspection, but whether on the first or second visit needed not to be specified.

St. John had returned to his house when St. Peter most likely came to the chamber where the larger number of disciples were assembled. The visions which the women had, must, as we saw in our last Meditation, have caused great excitement in that company. One would have expected St. Peter

¹ Some ancient authorities omit v. 12.

to be amongst the first to hurry away and see what was going on.

We may, however, assume that the women themselves had returned to the tomb before St. Peter reached it, for our Lord would not have given them a message to the brethren if He had already appeared to Peter, and it seems not unnatural to connect the recorded appearance to Simon with this visit of his to the tomb.

May we not, therefore, well suppose that Peter went first of all to tell St. John and the Blessed Virgin of the remarkable news which had just reached them? As the two disciples had gone together in the morning, it was but natural to hold some communication together again, and Peter would surely feel that it was due to the Mother of our Lord to inform her of the supernatural events which were bursting forth in such mysterious significance. He himself would be very little able to enter into that calmness of patient faith with which Mary pondered and waited in stillness upon the Lord. It is perhaps an evidence of the more advanced faith of St. John that he stayed with the Blessed Virgin at home instead of going off again to the tomb. At least we are not told that he went. What he had seen would enable him to share in that confidence with which Mary herself looked forward for the rising again of her Son. O that we could learn to wait for Jesus with perfect trust! We do not hasten His manifestation by any efforts of our own. Trustful love is that which will most surely bring Him near to us. If He tarries, it is for our good.

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If, then, we are to accept the verse of St. Luke (although there is considerable doubt as to its genuineness), we may think of St. Peter's visit to the tomb as having suffered some such delay as this.

Or again, it may be that he did not go to the tomb until the women had returned again, when they would report that they had seen not only the angels but the Lord Himself.

These details are of little consequence, for we know, anyhow, that our Lord appeared to Simon Peter, and the place or manner matters not.

O Jesu, show Thyself, I beseech Thee, in the fulness of Thy risen power. Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. Enable me to experience the power of Thy resurrection that I may live with Thy life.

My son, believe in Me. Soon shall thy faith be turned into sight. Sight which is given before faith is perfected destroys the very power of faith. Faith must be perfected if the vision is to bring the blessing.

O Jesu, lead me onward that I may believe more perfectly. Why should I wish to see, if indeed I do believe. O Lord, I ask not to have visions here. Enough if Thou wilt give me grace to die that I may see. Yea, I would desire to die more and more to outward things, that the heavenly vision may be granted me. Sweet death, when I shall see Thee as Thou art!

2. THE PENITENT APOSTLE.

Let us notice the order of events. The penitent is the first to find the empty sepulchre. The women whom she accompanied saw an angel whom she saw not. Penitence would not find consolation in mere angelic ministries and promises for the future. The penitent is the first who is permitted to see the risen Lord. This is the sight which she needs. It is not denied to her. So with St. Peter. How can the bitter sorrow of His denials be done away until he has seen Jesus? Can he welcome Jesus along with the eleven unless his own individual sin has been pardoned? He has denied that he was one of Jesus' disciples: can he simply take his place and be sure that Jesus recognises him as one of his disciples now? We can see that such a restoration was necessary. The dignity of the Apostleship requires to have the wound healed ere its privileges can be again enjoyed. We see then why Jesus should appear to Simon.

Truly his conversion had been foretold as distinctly as his fall, but there would need some special token of acceptance ere the Apostles could look upon him as they had been used to do.

Wonderful was the transition from mourning a crucified Saviour to their present condition, in which they watched for Him to appear in heavenly power at any moment. The change, however, was in Him not in them. There had been a significant warning to Peter that the first should be last. There must

have been some suspicion that now they would find the sad doom accomplished. For their sakes it was necessary, as well as for his own, that our Lord should in some manner reinstate him before He came to breathe upon them all.

We can thus see how great importance attaches to this personal condescension whereby our Lord manifested Himself to the penitent Apostle.

The particulars of the interview are not recorded. This may be in order that we may remember that, however varied may be the forms of sin, the reality of absolving grace is one and the same to all.

O Jesu, grievously have I sinned against Thee. O let me experience the fulness of Thy gracious pardon. Appear to me, gracious Lord, in the unchangeableness of Thy love.

Think not, My son, that I have cast thee off because thou hast sinned. For thy sins I have died, and I rose again that thou mightest be justified. Seek therefore the all-sufficient grace of My resurrection, and I will renew thee with the fulness of restoring power.

O Lord, how unworthy I am of such great love.

In thine estate of misery thou wast unworthy that I should restore thee, but in thy restoration thou must show a gratitude worthy of the benefit from whence it springs.

Yea, Lord, my gratitude springs into life by the virtue of Thy Divine unmerited regard. As the life thereof comes from Thee, let me exhibit in its exercise the Divine truth of Thy sanctifying power.

*Thou dost not cast away from Thy pity. Raise us
then to the likeness of Thy love.*

8. THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE RESURRECTION.

To behold the risen Christ in grace is indeed some sort to share His resurrection. He shows Himself to His people. He shows not Himself to the world. It were verily a doom of death to behold the risen Lord with the eyes of nature unless there were the sustaining power of the Divine love lifting up the nature into fellowship with God and His own life. Had Christ returned to the mere life of this earth, all might have seen Him as they saw Lazarus whom He raised from the dead : but as He is passed on by the resurrection into a higher life, His presence can only be known where there is power to long for such high gifts. The longing soul receives as it knows because it loves that which it is called to receive. The soul which loves not cannot receive that knowledge which consists in love. To shrink back from receiving the love which the risen Saviour offers is to close up the faculties of the soul in rebellious hatred which becomes henceforth incapable of seeing aught that is lovely.

Well might the two penitents be chosen to be the first in their respective classes to behold the risen Saviour, for the resurrection implies the death which preceded it, and none can know it who know not the death. The angels behold indeed the life, but know it not as man requires to know, because the death through which that Body passed into new life was

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condition into which they could not look. We share the experience of resurrection because we enter into its knowledge through the gateway of sin, out of which we have been redeemed. As we have felt the bitterness of death so we become capable of knowing the sweetness of the recovered life. The resurrection is not a fresh creation in a higher life. It involves the experience of continuity, whereby that which has felt the Divine dereliction rises into the renewed energy of the fellowship of God. Had not Jesus felt the desolation of death, His new life would have been no real resurrection. We must know what it is to be delivered out of the power of darkness, if we are to know what it is to be risen as the members of Christ.

Those, then, who in their experience had felt most bitterly what sin was, were naturally most fit to experience first of all this renewal of joy.

They had not died away from God more than others because of the specialty of their sins. Death does not admit of degrees. The whole race of men were equally dead, although in that state of death some had experienced the corruption of death in forms of special development. There was no greater triumph of restoring power in the gift of life to one more than to another. Those who were most sheltered from the proper acts of sin were by nature as far from the Divine life as any other. We are not to suppose that because they were less involved in active sin they would be less conscious of their natural incapacity of life. The Blessed Virgin has dictated to all future ages the song of praise where-

with we rejoice in God our Saviour. Never the experience of the developed consequence of death cannot but engender in the soul which really hated the tyranny against which it is vain, a special natural sensibility of conscience shall make it more capable of telling for transformation which it has experienced.

We must not use the example of the sinner before grace was given as encouraging presumptuousness as to sins by which grace is forfeited. We who have been raised alone by Christ cannot sin against grace thus given without injury to what we have received. We cannot receive it anew in its own freshness. The resurrection of those who were in darkness did not in any way impair the light of grace which shone through their whole being with illuminative joy. The resurrection raises from many offences to justification (Rom. v. 16). They, then, in the bitterness of anguish might well be the first to welcome their Saviour in His triumphant return.

The Magdalen had experienced in a very peculiar manner her helplessness under the tyranny of sin and Peter had experienced in a very special manner the weakness of the flesh in spite of the yearnings of the spirit. In the power of the resurrection not only is Satan cast out, but the soul is taken into a security of Divine life which no one can no longer assail. He that is born of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not (1 St. John v. 18). The ministry of the resurrection, though exercised in the weakness

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flesh, is made effectual because the spirit is not only willing according to the impulse of nature, but renewed in the fulness of power by the communication of the Eternal Spirit of holiness.

For our sakes as well as for their own, it was mercifully ordained that first among the women and first among the Apostles the penitent should be chosen for the sight of the risen Lord.

O Jesu, woe is me by reason of my sins ! Yet as I have sinned against Thy grace, give me such deep repentance as may best fit me to praise Thee for the glory of Thy resurrection. Heal my soul, for I have sinned against Thee.

My son, thou must learn thine own misery that thou mayest enter into the joy of My renewal. Take heed that thou sin no more, lest thou mar more grievously the faculties of the regenerate nature whereby thou oughtest to strive after My love: but search into thy past sins with unceasing watchfulness, that knowing the greatness thereof thou mayest learn what great things I have done for thee.

O my Jesu, teach me to know myself and my sins. Only in the light of Thy presence can I know what my sins really are. Show me Thyself, and show me myself in Thyself. Show me what I am. Show me what Thou wouldst have me to be. Show me the glory of Thy transforming love, that I may yield myself to the power of Thy call and attain to the fulness of Thy predestination.

MEDITATION XIII.

The Walk to Emmaus.

And behold, two of them were going that very day to a village named Emmaus which was threescore furlongs from Jerusalem. And they communed with each other of all these things which had happened. And it came to pass, while they communed and questioned together, that Jesus himself drew near, and went with them. But their eyes were holden that they should not know him. And he said unto them, What communications are these that ye have one with another, as ye walk? And they stood still, looking sad. And one of them, named Cleopas, answering said unto him, Dost thou alone sojourn in Jerusalem and not know the things which are come to pass there in these days? And he said unto them, What things? And they said unto him, The things concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people: and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, and crucified him. But we hoped that it was he which should redeem Israel. Yea and beside all this, it is now the third day since these things came to pass. Moreover certain women of our company amazed us, having been early at the tomb; and when they found not his body, they came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels, which said that he was alive. And certain of them that were with us went to the tomb, and found it even so as the women had said: but him they saw not. And he said unto them, O foolish men, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Behoved it not the Christ to suffer these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning from Moses and from all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself. And they drew nigh unto the village, whither they were going: and he made as though he would go further. And they constrained him, saying, Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is now far spent. And he went in to abide with them. And it came to pass, when he had sat down with them to meat, he took the bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight. And they said one to another, Was not our heart burning within us, while he spake to us in the way, while he opened to us the scriptures? And they rose up that very hour, and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them, saying, The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon. And they rehearsed the things that happened in the way, and how he was known of them in the breaking of bread.—St. Luke xxiv. 13-35.

1. THE TWO DISCIPLES IN THEIR SAD CONVERSE.

We have seen how the assembled disciples disbelieved the reports of the women. Their hearts were sad because they could not receive the words of life. We are not told why these two were going to Emmaus. Possibly they lodged there during the feast. We must not confound Cleopas with Clopas, or Alphæus, the husband of Mary. He was a Greek,

me indicates, for it is the abbreviated form of *Emmānos*.

The mystery of Christ's resurrection must often grieve the natural heart in sadness. Ere we can understand it, we must first of all see all things die on which we naturally depend. If we do not accept the Lord with simplicity when He tells us of the tomb and the grave, the better life to which this path leads, we must feel that all has failed. It was so with these disciples.

There was, however, a power controlling and sustaining them even in their sadness. They did not lose all hope, even though they had lost their joy. They felt that things might work round to a way for good, although not for so great and complete a good as they had anticipated. They felt that the good was to be greater than their sorrow and that it was already in the process of manifestation.

It is so with us when we strive to think about the purpose of God in our own strength. However plainly He speaks, we cannot grasp His meaning. His ways are not our ways. We are left in our sadness.

It is only when He must come to us Himself that we may be delivered out of the sadness of our own experiences and attain the full perception of what Himself has said.

How can I be sad, when I think of Thee? For Thou art my God, and I knowest Me not. My walk in Thy ways must be sad if they do not recognise the brightness of the Eternal Light which is in Me.

Truly, Lord, Thy ways must ever be good, and those who follow Thee must find their goodness.

In the end they shall find, but none can find until they attain to the end. I lead My people through the valley of the shadow of death. There can be no joyousness of earth where all earthly grounds of hope must be seen to fail. My rod and My staff are the only stay of the souls that follow Me.

O Lord Jesu, surely when I know that Thou callest me to share Thy Cross, I shall be able to rejoice therein.

Yes, My son, if indeed thou knowest. But the natural heart cannot know, however eager the spirit may be. Unless My Spirit teach thee, thou canst not behold that which is invisible nor love the things which are Divine. Thy hope is good, but thou must learn how blind it is unless I give thee sight. My very promises must seem to fail, because they point onward to a life which is not of the earth, and they cannot be known until all earthly things are past away.

O let me rest satisfied, dear Lord, in Thee. I know Thou art He that has redeemed Israel, and the glory of Thy redeeming love shall never fail. Only be Thou my companion. Guide me with Thine eye, and let Thy loving Spirit lead me forth in the way of righteousness. O let Thy Spirit make known to me Thy love. Thy love shall make me rest secure. Thy love shall shine within my heart if Thou wilt guide my steps. If thou art present, Thou wilt

surely make plain the difficulties of Thy word. Without Thee I cannot understand what Thou commandest, but if Thou art near Thou wilt teach me day by day, that I may go forward in joyful faith.

2. THE STRANGER.

Jesus joined the disciples as they walked, and asked them of their sorrow. Well might it seem to them as if all must know what caused their gloom. The death of Jesus had not happened in a corner. The multitudes from a distance and the residents in the city must all alike have heard of what was done. If He were only a stranger come up to the feast He scarcely could be ignorant of what the leaders of the people had done in bringing the great prophet to death whose miracles had stirred the people and whose words had filled the Temple crowds with astonishment a few days before.

A stranger! Indeed He was a stranger there, alien to His mother's brethren, a stranger upon earth and a sojourner as all His fathers were. The land of man had not where to lay His head. The city of Jerusalem which He had chosen to be His dwelling-place could give to Him no home. Where He dwells, there He dwells. Jerusalem wherein He lives in the unity of the Holy Ghost, a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is

stranger in Jerusalem! In that better Jerusalem it is they who are the strangers. They are the bright glow of its grace, and yet they

know it not. Wonderful things have to be spoken that city of God, and He who walks along with them shall teach them of its mysteries. 'This is His resting-place for ever. Here will He dwell, for He has a delight therein.'

They know Him not, but He knows them full well. Their eyes were holden, so that they could not perceive His well-known form. Their earthly senses held them in such bondage that they could not perceive Him. Yet He was no earthly pilgrim now. He who walks beside them is the very Son of David, living in the glorious promise where David's throne should be established in eternity of dominion.

How constantly is Jesus with us, and yet we fail to perceive His glory. Things seem to be going on with earthly agencies all round about us, and we know not the Divine Master whose companionship is the very object of our desire.

Nevertheless Jesus is near though we know it not, and He is ready to help. For us the responsibility is great, since Jesus has taught us outwardly, and we must be looking for Him interiorly. He joined the two who were walking to Emmaus, though they had not solicited Him. But they had not the knowledge necessary to pray for His manifestation. We have and therefore we must pray. We must ever be looking for Him to join us on our way. To them that look for Him He shall appear not only when He comes in His glory the second time, but according to the demands of their faith, in secret fellowship even now. Now He comes to be our help, our teacher,

the way. Hereafter He who is the Truth shall be known as our Life. He who is with us amidst the surroundings of death will gather us to be with Himself in His own eternal Life.

O Jesu, how canst Thou ever meet me as a stranger? Thou, who art dearer to me than any earthly object to which my soul can turn.

Blessed art thou if thou lovest Me, O My son. Yet be not surprised that I appear to thee often so that thou dost not know Me. Thy knowledge of Me at the best is very scanty. manifold are the depths of My being which thou canst never fathom. Thou must learn My greatness by thine ignorance. So must thou grow to the knowledge of My love. The forms wherein I have made Myself known to thee do not exhaust My love for thee. With My whole being I love thee, and in every fresh manifestation thou shalt find My love acting with fresh power towards thee.

O Saviour, infinite in Thine essence, and full of love, show Thyself to me in every way whereby I may come to the fuller experience of Thy goodness. I rejoice to lose myself in the abyss of Thy love and to feel myself enkindled with the gracious power of Thy words. Henceforth I must indeed feel sure that whenever any word of truth stirs my heart with holy power, it is Thou who speakest it. All other words are cold and profitless. Thou speakest by whomsoever Thou wilt. Though it seem to me that I am even as Samuel when there was no open vision of prophecy,

and he knew not the Lord, yet speak, Lord, to and raise me out of all my dulness. When ot speak, I learn nothing. The things of God brought down to the littleness of earth by the firmity of the speaker. When Thou speakest, I indeed lifted up to contemplate Divine myster When Thou speakest, Thou dost manifest Thys for Thou art the Word, the Speaker, and the Tri Thou speakest of Thyself, and it is of Thine own t the Spirit takes to show unto us.

My son, ever be thou living in this desire the truth, that thou mayest grow thereby. I truths of earth burden the intellect, but I the living Truth, and he that rises up to life the knowledge of Me rises to My own greatness and shall in the end behold Me perfectly.

O Lord, to know Thee is to love Thee, and love Thee is to be like to Thee, yea, to be one w Thee. O let me lose all other knowledge that I n have no other life but that which is found in Th To live to anything else is to be as a stranger Thee. Henceforth I desire to be absorbed in unity of Thy Life. Thou art my only Teacher. Tl art the only Truth. The only life that can abide the life of Thy most perfect love. Other thoug vanish from my soul when I think how Thou lov me, and every form wherein Thou appearest is fresh revelation of Thy love. O Thou all-containing Truth, exhaustless Love, eternal Life! Thou com to be with us in the journey of our life in the wor Thou takest upon Thyself our nature and hid Thyself, speaking to us as man, yet never ceasing be God. As I go through the world, let me alw

listen to Thee, and let Thy love dispel my ignorance and Thy truth perfect my love. Thou comest as a stranger into this lower world, that Thou mayest gather us as children into the glory of the eternal home.

8. THE THIRD DAY.

It is the third day since those things happened which had caused them sorrow. How strange that they should have so little remembrance that the third day was to bring them joy. Had not Jesus when He spoke of His own death told them plainly that on the third day He must rise again? How could He have spoken more plainly to them than by referring them to Jonah as a type of Himself? They had not understood His words. The type was dumb until the antitype put voice into its silent form. Truly their eyes, their memories, their understanding were holden, so that they did not see things which even the world saw. The enemy would guard the sepulchre, fearing that there should be a feigned resurrection, but the faithful heeded not what their Master had told them.

Yet the idea of the third day filled their mind. Probably there was some vague consciousness of the third day being a day of expectation. How little did they realise that on that very morning certain women of their company had fulfilled the very words of prophecy in going to the sepulchre. 'In their affliction they will seek me early' (Hos. v. 15). This is indeed the day of which Hosea spake. 'After two days will He revive us: in the third day He will raise us up, and



we shall live in His sight.' The resurrection of Jesus was a resurrection in which they themselves must share. This day is the morning of a great day, the day of the Lord, the day of grace. The dark night hinders not the rising of the sun, so neither does their sorrow make the promised resurrection of Israel's Redeemer doubtful. Ancient prophecy passed into silence, leaving this assurance behind as its last promise: 'Unto you that fear My Name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings, and ye shall go forth and grow up as calves of the stall' (Mal. iv. 2). Such life, light, joy could not be in nature or in grace, if there were not death, darkness, sorrow, out of which the new day should spring. But as yet they knew not the day. They knew it not, and so neither did they recognise Him to whom they spoke. 'His going forth is prepared (*i.e.* established and certain) as the morning.' The Sun of righteousness must rise, as surely as morning must in nature succeed to night. That morning of which the prophet spoke was come. The natural day was 'far spent,' but a day of grace was opening upon them which should develop through many ages until their present ignorance, sadness, wonder, were changed into knowledge, blessedness, gratitude, of eternity. O they not appropriate the words as kindling hopes, 'Then shall we know, if we follow on know the Lord' ? (Hos. vi. 3).

Now indeed the Lord whose going forth was claimed has come forth, has met them, has come to heal them, has feigned ignorance that He might give them the true knowledge.

On the third day after Pharaoh and his host were overthrown in the Red sea, the children of Israel came to Marah, where the waters were bitter. The law could not bring healing. Those waters needed to be healed by the tree which the Lord would show to Moses. Now it is the third day since Satan and his hosts were overthrown. Now has the Sun of righteousness risen, with healing upon His wings.

These disciples are going from Jerusalem to Emmaus. Jerusalem has become a place of death. Emmaus shall be to them as a vision of peace. The village to which they were going had its name from some hot springs. How little did they understand that they were going forth to the city of God, whose waters were even now beginning to overflow, as the power of God's Eternal Spirit gave them warmth and virtue for the healing of the nations.¹ Sadly they walked to this village. No thought had they that there Jesus could be made known to them. They had come out of the old Jerusalem and the Jewish Temple. They knew not that Jesus was to be there as 'a sanctuary' whose presence might be found in every place, making a heavenly Jerusalem wherever He was found. On this third day, their sadness shall indeed be turned into joy.

¹ The name Emmaus = $756 = 7 \times 9 \times 12$. Twelve the number of the city of God; nine of Divine power; seven of the Holy Ghost. It was sixty furlongs distant from Jerusalem, i.e. the old city of Jerusalem is distant from the heavenly by the measure of earth. Every form of six tells of earthly power when void of grace.

O Jesu, it is Thou who comest forth in the morning to heal us. Thou art the Lord by whom we escape death.

Yea, My son, I am the Lord, and beside Me there is no Saviour. Wait upon My promises. I will fulfil them to thee when thou art little aware. If thy faith fail not, thou shalt find that the good which I do unto thee is manifold more than the evil which thou hast suffered. 'For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee.'

O Lord, truly Thy mercies are new every morning. When I forget Thy promises my soul becomes heavy, but the fault is all my own. Truly Thou art the Redeemer of Israel. 'Surely I will rise and go unto the place of which Thou hast told me' (Gen. xxii. 8), 'even the place which Thou hast prepared for me' (John xiv. 8). On the third day shall the place be seen afar off. In the power of Thy resurrection shall the beautiful land come before our watchful eyes. Thou makest me to see Thyself as king in all Thy beauty, and I shall behold the land that is very far off. I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills from whence cometh my help, and though I am yet a long way off, I know Thou seest me (Lam. xv. 20), and thou wilt bring me unto Thy holy hill and to Thy dwelling.

MEDITATION XIV.

The Seed of the Woman.

Behaved it not the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into his glory.—
St. Luke xxiv. 26.

1. CHRIST OPENING THE SCRIPTURES.

JESUS began to unfold to them the Scriptures. O what a gain would it be to us, if we could but have the record of what He said! The whole volume of the Old Testament would thenceforth speak to us in a manner altogether beyond our present conception.

As when some elaborate structure looming in the darkness gradually assumes a new majestic beauty while the lines of illumination are kindled on a high day of festival, so all the well-known teachings which these disciples knew from childhood began to spring into bright life beneath the touch of His words. The Light of Light is with them, whose forthshining was God's first token of renewing love to our dark earth. Every promise that God has given to fallen man, from the announcement of the woman's seed whose heel the tyrant must bruise, and Isaac's mystical death, and Joseph's rising from the pit of drought to the throne of power, and Moses' flight ere he appeared as the redeemer from Egyptian slavery, and Joshua's appointment to a work which

needed one greater than himself to satisfy God's purpose, and the sacrifices carefully ordered in the Temple, and the songs of David intertwining deep sorrow and such high hopes—yes! they heard words taken from those Psalms solemnly appropriated by the recent Sufferer upon the Cross. All was set before them as they walked upon the way, and they saw in those tales of ancient times more than their childhood knew. Their whole life had been a childhood. As they heard His words they seem to ripen to a mature understanding of what they had known before only in germ. The scroll of the old law seemed to blossom into all the glory of a new life, as when Aaron's rod budded the tabernacle of witness.

All prophets spake of one that was for to come. The lives of their fathers were fashioned in type to Him that was to bring salvation. The whole nation had borne many a weight that must have crushed them, but they were made strong with a high hope which could not fail. The priesthood of Aaron was to pass away, but Israel enshrined a greater priesthood that must take its place. The throne of David would seem to fall, but there must be found one who should reign for ever and ever. The star of wisdom Balaam spake must come. The kingdom of which Daniel prophesied must be set up.

Yet should all this be done by no art of man. The builders would reject the Stone which should become the headstone of the corner (Ps. cxviii). They would reject, but God's word could not fail. This Stone is that which should be laid before Josiah.

having seven eyes, the Living Stone exalted to the glory of God, whereon the Church should be founded, so that the gates of hell should not prevail against it. God, by the power of the Eternal Spirit operating through the mystery of the Passion, 'would engrave the graving thereof, and remove the iniquity of the land in one day' (Zech. iii. 9). That one day must stand alone in the annals of time. The one day of atonement in every year was its transitory symbol in the Jewish Temple. The Jews would reject, and though all men should in the end bow down before Him, He did not keep His own soul from death.¹ He had come to do God's work. He would do it in God's way. This is He of whom the prophet speaks: 'Thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin' (Is. liii. 10).

It will help us in our own consideration of Holy Scripture if we try to think what were in all probability the leading points of this discourse. Much as we may lament our not having a record of it, we may be sure we are better without it, for if it had been well for us to have it, God would have recorded it. God wants us rather to search into Holy Scripture for ourselves, and the Holy Ghost will help us if we seek His aid. Though we have to grope our way in much darkness and to feel with our hands instead of seeing at a glance what we want to know, God sees it to be better for us thus slowly, experimentally, and laboriously to search into the Divine mysteries.

¹ Mr. Pieritz has observed that this is the only possible rendering of Ps. xxii. 29, 'All that go down to the dust shall bow before Him, but He shall not keep alive His own soul.'

We are not to treat the prophecies as if they were merely of demonstrative value. There is danger of our letting them become nothing more than deeds of conveyance in a lawyer's office which we rely upon but do not care to read. We must search into them with affectionate interest, and go on searching, for the more we find, the fuller will their power to teach us be.

O Jesu, grant me by Thy Holy Spirit to take delight in the study of Thy holy Word. Though much be hidden from me, let me not become weary of searching, for Thou wilt surely unfold the Scriptures now to every faithful disciple according to his need.

My son, be assured when thou dost read My holy Word that the blessed gift of understanding will not be withheld from thee. I give it not merely that thou mayest know, but in order that by knowing thou mayest love. Be careful then to study what has been written for thee by the Spirit of love in the power of that Divine love whereby thou mayest hear His voice.

O Lord Jesu, so would I desire to do. One gleam of light wherewith Thy Holy Spirit cheers my darkness, though it be but as the summer lightning in its momentary softness, quickly disappearing, is yet better than any clearness of knowledge which I gain from that which has been written by man.

Even so, My son. Yea, if thou seekest to be taught after this manner, thou shalt find the whole canopy of heaven lit up for thee as thou goest upon thy way through the darkness, and

thou shalt experience the vastness of Thy providence and the individuality of Thy love.

Dear Lord, I know Thou wilt teach the humble and loving soul, by means of Thy Word, things which the learning of the natural heart can never find. Grant me such childlike simplicity in the presence of Thy mysteries, that I may indeed profit thereby according to Thy holy will.

2. THE SEED OF THE WOMAN.

The Stranger would begin by speaking of the Seed of the woman whose struggle was to issue in the overthrow of evil. That first promise was a promise of victory to be won with difficulty. It could not be fulfilled by any gradual development of sovereign power in a peaceful reign. The work of Messiah was to be 'peace' in the end (Is. xxxii. 17), but it was to be attained by suffering.

When He came into the world He would have to meet the enmity of the wicked, and His enemies would be urged on in their conflict by a power greater than man. The serpent was called Satan because he was the great enemy, both of God, and of man created in God's image. He hates the human race, symbolised by the woman whom he had deceived in Paradise, and he would make her children rise up with hearts poisoned by his malice against the truth, so that they would hate any of their brethren, if such there could be found, who would be true to the Divine will, the law of their creation.

All who are begotten of fallen man must be under

Satan's power, although in some cases God may be pleased to shelter individual souls from the full consequences of this original sin. Satan had brought poison into the nature of man by making him eat that which God had forbidden, and all the race were tainted thereby.

Therefore was it prophesied that this conqueror, the Son of man, in whom the human race should triumph at the last, must be born of no earthly father.

'Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?' (Job xiv. 4). The Seed of the woman must be one who had an origin anterior to His appearance in man's nature. In the strength of Divine purity He would take man's sinful nature upon Himself and yet would remain untainted thereby. He would purify and cleanse it by the fact of taking it, so that although it would be in sin that His mother conceived Him, nevertheless He would have 'truth in His inward parts and understand wisdom secretly' (Ps. li. 6). The sin of the fallen nature which He assumed would vanish before the presence of His Divine purity as he assumed it. The sin of Adam would not pass on to Him, for the eternal glory of His Person could not receive its taint. So must the Seed of the woman be indeed the Son of God if He was to accomplish His destined victory. Thus had Isaiah prophesied, 'A virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call His name Immanuel' (Is. vii. 14).

He must be alone in His struggle against Satan and against mankind. Abel bearing the hatred of

Cain was but a type of Him. Joseph was a type of Him who should thus be 'separate from His brethren' (Gen. xlix. 26), while He Himself as 'the Son of the mighty God of Jacob' is 'the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel' (xlix. 24), by whom Joseph and all the typical forerunners of His struggle were strengthened for their conflict. So must that come to pass which Isaiah said, 'He saw there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor; therefore His arm brought salvation, and His righteousness it sustained him' (Is. lix. 16). 'I have trodden,' says He, 'the winepress alone, and of the people there was none with Me' (Is. lxiii. 8).

This Divine Solitary must bear the hatred of the serpent and of the serpent's seed. As His righteousness was to be the righteousness of God, so must His sufferings be worthy of a Divine Sufferer.

If Abel suffered, and all the prophets and witnesses to God in various ages, much more must this Seed of the woman suffer ere He could enter into His glory.

Mankind would indeed think that He was suffering by reason of Divine wrath upon Him when they saw the intense 'anguish of His soul' (Gen. xlii. 21). Their hatred against God manifested in Him would blind them to the beauty of the Divine character which he exhibited. His life amongst men, with its supernatural virtues, would be a reason for their hatred, as Joseph's coat of many colours which his father gave to him whereby he was designated as the priest of the family. 'When his brethren saw that their father loved him more than all his brethren, they

hated him, and could not speak peaceably to him" (Gen. xxxvii. 4).

So was it in the very nature of things that the Seed of the woman must be 'a stranger unto his brethren, an alien unto his mother's children' (Pa. lxix. 8). In type of him Jeremiah had exclaimed, 'Woe is me, my mother, that thou hast borne me a man of strife and a man of contention to the whole earth! I have neither lent on usury nor men have lent to me on usury; yet every one of them doth curse me' (Jer. xv. 10).

O Jesu, grant that I may never fear to stand alone against the world, nor think to gain the world's praise while I strive to do the will of the Father.

My son, if they have hated Me, they will also hate thee. Be true to Me, and abide in the power of My grace. If now thou wilt suffer, by and by shalt thou prevail.

O Lord, I tremble because I know my sinfulness. I deserve to be hated of Thee, and am not worthy to bear hatred for Thy name.

Accept what thou bearest as the punishment of thy fault, and yet rejoice to bear it, for My grace shall make it turn to thy reward.

O Lord, how unspeakable is Thy goodness. Thou comest down to bear my punishment that I in my suffering may be made partaker of Thy merit and rise upward to behold Thy glory.

8. THE DISCIPLINE OF SUFFERING.

It was certain that the Seed of the woman in triumphing over the Prince of the world must encounter the opposition of the world. The prophecy contained an enunciation of what was a necessary social truth. Man's evil heart hates goodness as such, and seeks only that which is good for itself in its own fallen condition. The Prince of this world, hating man, stirs up mankind against everything which tends to man's final and eternal good and the glory of God. So is there enmity between the serpent and the woman, and between his seed and her Seed.

Suffering, however, for fallen man is not an evil. God has ordained it as a means of recovery. It is remedial and meritorious.

As it is the punishment of sin it requires to be accepted by the penitent soul for the glory of God. Human suffering in this world is not the exercise of God's vindictive wrath, but of loving discipline. It does not effect its purpose by its own intensity, but by the acceptance of the sufferer. The penitent must rejoice to suffer as an act of justice. He delights to suffer, not in order to escape from greater suffering, but in order to make reparation for the sins whereby he has dishonoured God. In accepting suffering he shows his love to God, as God also by ordaining suffering shows His love, whereby He seeks to give man the opportunity of developing those qualities of righteousness wherein God Himself delights.

The Seed of the woman, therefore, who w triumph on behalf of mankind, must triumph accordance with this law. Man's nature could be set free from the consequences of the fall e by exhibiting that knowledge of God's truth v would make Him put forth the highest energi endurance, so as to exhibit human nature in its f development of perfection in making reparatio sin. ' By His knowledge shall my Righteous Se justify many, for He shall bear their iniqui (Is. liii. 11). If there were any sin of the h race for which the Seed of the woman did not s then He would have failed in that identificatio Himself with the Divine Righteousness, which i could entitle Him to become victorious over the en The principle of atonement consists, not in the sh endurance of a measured punishment, even th infinite, but in the will being identified in hol with the Divine will, perfected therefore in the D love, so that sin is as truly hateful to the Redeem Humanity as it is to the Sovereign Godhead.

The suffering of the Seed of the woman is a i ration for the sins of the race, because it is the n festation of a true and meritorious love. That does not cancel the sin as by payment of a fine developes a faculty of holiness, by which the di of life is restored to an organism degraded by It is remedial on behalf of the sinful race becau is meritorious in itself. It is the exercise of a D life within the organism of humanity which sanc the members of the race in so far as they live and share it.

The human race is not properly a multitude of individuals, each of them needing a separate salvation. Separated individuality is a consequence of the fall. Being dead we are separate one from another. As men possessing life we are members one of another. The life of regeneration cannot be had save by the gathering together in one of all the redeemed in Christ. The Seed of the woman triumphs therefore not merely as a representative champion, the child of human nature, but as a representative unit, the Father of the Eternal Life (Is. ix. 5), the head of a new race. 'It became Him for Whom are all things, and by Whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings' (Heb. ii. 10). His sons accept the cross as He accepted it. His mind is theirs. They are set free from the power of the enemy because He communicates to them a new living power of generous love to God by the gift of the Holy Ghost. Thus in the great Psalm of redemption we have the prayer for the members of Christ, 'Stablish me with Thy free (or generous) Spirit' (Ps. li. 12).

So would the Seed of the woman triumph although the serpent should bruise His heel, for God would enable Him thereby to bruise the serpent's head. The wounded nature would not withdraw itself from the bite until it had annihilated the power of the enemy by exhausting to the utmost the resources of his impotent malice. Thus would He triumph in the love of God by the power of the Spirit of God.

Moses therefore taught the same truth as the Psalmist in later time. 'The sacrifices of God are a troubled spirit : a broken and contrite heart, O God, shalt Thou not despise' (Ps. li. 17). This heart was to be the foundation of the new humanity, the living foundation-stone of the heavenly city. Therefore the Psalm continues, 'O be favourable and gracious unto Sion : build Thou the walls of Jerusalem. Then shalt Thou be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness.' Every stone of the living city would grow with the same law of penitential oblation in the unity of the power of the Holy Ghost.

Suffering is therefore the response of man struggling against sin in changeless love to God. The suffering of another world, the penal suffering of the lost (whether here or there) is of no avail, because there is no principle of Divine love to be aroused. The Seed of the woman is the mediatorial channel of a justifying life, so that if He makes us free we are free indeed ; but he that believeth not in Him, choosing to remain outside of His Body, is condemned and has no means of escape, because he has not believed on the only-begotten Son of God (John iii. 18). He must perish in the fire prepared for the devil and his angels.

O Jesu, help me to bear the cross and follow Thee to victory.

Seek not joy in this lower life if thou wouldst share the glory of My kingdom.

O my Jesu, when I know the suffering which Thou hast borne I must count it all joy to suffer with Thee, that I may overcome the enemy.

He will endeavour to ensnare thee, My son, by offering thee the things of this world if thou wilt yield to him.

Nay, Lord, never let me surrender myself either to his violence or to his fraud. Hast Thou not promised that Thou wilt bruise Satan under our feet shortly?

True, My son. I will bruise Satan under thy feet by the power of Mine Eternal Spirit Whom I have given to be thy life, but thou must show thyself equal to the conflict by suffering without fear whatever evils he may inflict on thee. They are only for a time. The glory, after thou hast suffered, shall last for ever.

So be it, Lord, I give myself to Thee. Strengthen me that I may hold firmly by Thee all the days of my life.

MEDITATION XV.

The Servant of the Lord.

Beginning from Moses and from all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.—St. Luke xxiv. 27.

1. ABIDING FRUIT OF LIFE.

THE Seed of the woman was thus evidently to appear as a sufferer in a conflict with powers of evil both natural and supernatural, triumphing by His suffering so as to raise the fallen race in His own Person to the glory from whence it had fallen.

Who is this Seed? It is the Son of God. How does He save? He saves in suffering.

Inasmuch as the abstract phrase is used, 'Seed of the woman,' not 'son of the woman,' we may employ the argument used by the Jews with reference to another passage, and conclude that Messiah should be a person of supernatural dignity, taking His manhood from the woman, but having his own glory antecedently to the Incarnation. His own Person dwelt in the glory of the Father before He came into the world.

His suffering, however, was not only by Divine power to restore to healthy action the crippled energies of humanity. This we have seen in the last Meditation. It was moreover to be effectual in

obtaining gifts for man from God. Inasmuch as the suffering life of Christ was a form of obedience rendered by the human will, it was eminently pleasing to God, and God would proportionately reward it. Consequently we have to consider the title which belongs to Him, the Servant of the Lord.

The work which He would do was to have an abiding value. By all that He did He was constructing a wondrous organism of moral beauty which was to last for ever.

Our actions produce results quite independently of our own will. We cannot help their consequences nor can we adequately foresee them, whether they be good or evil. Jesus, on the contrary, by every act was accomplishing an eternal object of glory which He foresaw. The meritorious results of His suffering constitute the very glory into which He is entered. He does not receive glory externally as a reward for what He has done, but He develops the glory in His actions by which those actions are to be eternally rewarded.

It is the power of the Eternal Spirit which gives such efficacy to His acts.

O that we bore in mind the power of that Holy Spirit, giving dignity still to the actions of Christ's members. If we would but think of the Divine glory which is developed as an eternal reward for us by the exercise of God's Holy Spirit, how we should delight to exert His powers. We too in Christ are not rewarded for what we do, but in what we do. The dead in Christ 'rest from their labours, and their works do follow them' (Rev. xiv. 18). The acts of

Christ live on in ours, communicating impulse, form, dignity, substance, acceptability, life, joy, eternity.

If we felt that we were thus as servants of the Lord carrying on the work of building—what is called in the New Testament ‘the edification of the body of Christ’—we should be much less disheartened at the seeming resultlessness of so many actions; we should be strengthened for toil, we should rejoice in being permitted to suffer.

O Jesu, how didst Thou suffer when Thou wouldst work our salvation! How was I present to Thy mind, that Thou mightest provide for me an inheritance of glory with all Thy saints. Even so be Thou present to my mind, that I may labour for the glory that is about to be revealed.

My son, thou must take up thy cross daily, and if thou wilt follow Me thou must look to Me. Unless thou look to Me while carrying thy cross, thou wilt not be able to bring anything to good effect.

Lord Jesu, alas, I am apt to forget Thee until I have done what I need to do, and then I fail.

Yea, My son, thou wilt fail if thou look not to Me. Go Me at the outset that thou mayest do it for My glory, to Me in the effort that thou mayest do it according to My pattern, to Me at the end that thou mayest offer it for My acceptance.

Even so, Lord : I desire to have Thee always before me. I can do nothing without Thee. With Thee I will do whatever Thou wilt.

2. THE BUILDING OF GOD'S HOUSE.

The title servant of the Lord is applied to Moses, Joshua, and David. It is first of all given to Moses to vindicate him from the jealousies of Aaron and Miriam (Num. xii. 7). At the very outset it is a word indicating the endurance of antagonism. It belonged to Moses because 'he was faithful in all his house.' To Christ it belongs with a higher signification of glory, 'inasmuch as He that buildeth the house hath more honour than the house.' Moses was a servant in the house as a member of the household. Christ was to be over the house of God as the builder of the better sanctuary 'which the Lord pitched and not man' (Heb. viii. 2), a Servant truly, but also a Son. He is the true Servant, whom God upholds by His indwelling Presence in the unity of the Godhead. His service is eternal. He was to build eternally by dying to this transitory world, building not the things of earth in their deadness, but the plant of the Lord in its germinant life.

Every house that man builds must perish, and therefore God is able to appeal to David, 'Spake I a word with any of the tribes of Israel, whom I commanded to feed my people Israel, saying, Why build ye not Me an house of cedar?' (2 Sam. vii. 7). Rather God had spoken of One who was to come, the faithful Priest, for whom God Himself would build a sure house (1 Sam. ii. 35). The building would be an act of Divine grace. It would be the reward of the faithfulness of the service.

Moses was to make all things after the pattern showed to him in the mount. That tabernacle was a type therefore of the sure house belonging to Messiah, ready to be revealed.

In due time the antitype should be revealed. 'The Lord will build up Zion, and His glory shall appear' (Ps. cii. 16). We may speak of the city or of the temple, for they are one. In the heavenly Jerusalem there is no temple. The whole city shall be consecrated, for Messiah's 'foundations are upon the holy hills' of the Divine glory.

Why does God build? He builds to glorify His Son.

This eternal city is to be the very Bride of His Servant. The building has its type in the creation of Eve. 'The rib which the Lord God had taken from man builded He as a woman, and brought her unto the man' (Gen. ii. 22).

Is then this building to be in any way a work of humiliation to the Messiah? The typical formation of Eve shows us. The Church was to spring out of Christ's grave. Adam was buried in sleep. It is from the sleep of a Saviour's death that the second Eve shall spring. By the blood and water flowing from the pierced side of Jesus, the Church was to be built to be His Bride.

Moreover, the continual shedding of blood in the tabernacle was the building up of the household of God through the ages which preceded Christ. Those deaths were types of that humiliation even to death by which Messiah would build up His Church through sacramental ordinances during many generations.

David desired to build a better temple. Why could he not? It was not for him to do the work, because he had shed the blood of others. The Servant of the Lord must build the temple with His own Blood, not taking life to enlarge earthly dominion, but giving life so as to raise to heavenly glory. When God shall be gracious and favourable unto Zion, building the walls of Jerusalem, it shall be in response to the broken heart of the sin-bearer. The blood shed from that heart in sacrificial streams of propitiation shall be the cement whereby the new, the eternal city, the Church of the living God, shall be built.

Thus does the building of the tabernacle and temple in the time of Moses and David prepare the way for the Servant of the Lord, the true Eliakim the son of Hilkihah, 'into whose hand God would commit the government, and the key of the house of David' (Is. xxii. 21).

He typifies Christ in His resurrection by his very name, for Eliakim means 'God will raise up,' and his father is Hilkihah, *i.e.* the Lord is my portion.

In the glory of the coming Servant, Israel is personified. 'Israel, thou art My servant: fear thou not, for I am with thee.' These words are an anticipation of the presence of Immanuel, before whom the old nation fades away, and from whom the new Church of the redeemed is born, the seed of Christ, the generation of the Lord (Is. xliii. 5; Ps. xxii. 80).

O Jesu, by Whom the house of the Lord is being built, dwell Thou in me and build me up with all

Thy saints in the unity of that glorious fabric wherein Thou shalt rejoice to show Thyself dwelling everlastingly.

O My son, the painful discipline of earthly sorrow is the means whereby all those who come to Me are made partakers of My life.

Surely, Lord, Thou dost pour the oil and the wine of Thy Spirit and Thy Blood into the wounds of Thy people! O wounds precious beyond compare, which can be made effectual to the receiving of such wondrous gifts!

O My son, thou must show that thou livest with My own life by the joy wherewith thou dost accept My cross: so shall My joy shine out in thee with eternal brightness, and the wounds which thou hast to bear shall be transformed into the marks of glory whereby thou shalt be known in the manifestation of My mystical body.

Yea, Lord, it is the sufferings of time which mark Thy body with the lustre of eternity. The law of Thine own glorification is that whereby all Thy members must be glorified in Thee.

Remember this, My son, that so thou mayest not faint when thou feelest the sharpness of thy wounds.

Indeed, Jesu, I know it well, though my weak nature is so apt to rebel against Thine appointment. Yet surely thus it is that Thou wilt set me free from my own weakness and make me partaker of Thy strength. The wounds which Thou makest me to bear are wounds of love. Grant me to accept them

cheerfully, that so my service may not be marred by any rebellion. O let me die to myself by the wounds of Thy holy discipline, that Thou mayest live in me by the sweetness of Thy communicated merit.

8. THE SERVANT GLORIFIED.

This Servant would be rejected and despised of Israel, but none the less would He accomplish the work which God gave Him to do (Is. liii.).

In His resurrection all the nations of the world would come to Him. 'Thus saith the Lord to Him whom man despiseth, It is a light thing that Thou shouldst be My Servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the preserved of Israel. I will also give Thee for a light to the Gentiles, that Thou mayest be My salvation unto the ends of the earth' (Is. lxi. 6-7). 'Rejoice, ye Gentiles, as being now God's people' (Deut. xxxii. 43.)

Nineveh had repented at the preaching of Jonah, who was himself a prophet out of Galilee, and as these Gentiles had humbled themselves before the prophet who had been three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so would it happen when Christ rose after three days from the dead. His word would subdue the nations of the world, and the sons of Zion would be raised up against the sons of Greece, and the arrows of the Lord would be as lightning to the ends of the earth (Zech. ix. 14).

Sorely would the faithfulness of the Servant of the Lord be tried ere He could receive His glory. He would be obedient unto death, even the death of the

Cross. But this is the reason of His exaltation. He who has accepted death for God's sake shall find life in God. Therefore would God highly exalt Him, and give Him a name which is above every name.

This is He of whom Ezekiel told, 'David My servant shall be king over them, and they shall all have one Shepherd. My tabernacle also shall be with them : yea, I will be their God and they shall be My people' (Ezek. xxxvii. 24, 27).

O how gloriously do we see the Servant of the Lord coming forth from His rejection to accomplish His wondrous work. His suffering service receives a full recompence of reward. The prayer of the Psalmist is fulfilled, 'Remember, Lord, the rebuke which Thy servants have, and how I do bear in my bosom the rebukes of many people : wherewith Thine enemies have blasphemed Thee, and slandered the footsteps of Thine Anointed' (Ps. lxxxix. 45, 50).

Messiah would build the Temple of God more gloriously than Zerubbabel, and it was the glory of His presence which gave effect to the words of Haggai, that 'the glory of the latter house should be greater than that of the former' (Hagg. ii. 9). The heavens and the earth and the sea and the dry land shall be shaken, and then shall it be seen that out of this latter house has come forth an eternal glory which cannot be shaken and shall remain for ever (Heb. xii. 27). This is the Branch whom Joshua by his very name foreshadowed. 'He shall build the temple of the Lord' (Zech. vi. 12). Nehemiah is a type of Him as He builds anew the fallen city of his fathers. In that heavenly city which in the days

to come shall dwell safely and bear His name, 'the Lord our righteousness' (Jer. xxxiii. 16), shall God indeed be pleased with the sacrifice of righteousness whereby the heavenly things themselves shall be purified. Those sacrifices shall be the constant presentation of His accepted service, His body fragrant with the never-failing incense of His exhaustless merits.

Messiah shall indeed be the father of a new world, the true Solomon, born of the race of fallen man, as David's son was born of her that had been the wife of Uriah the Hittite, and yet claiming in the fulness of truth that relation to God which Solomon could only claim in a typical form. 'I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son' (2 Sam. vii. 14).

Surely the Father hath sealed Him and sent Him into the world to give the Divine life to all that will receive Him, that to them too it may be said, 'Ye are all the children of the most Highest,' for the Son of God shall bind them with Himself 'in the bundle of life' (2 Sam. xxv. 29), in the power of the Spirit whereby He shall renew unto eternity the face of the earth (Ps. civ. 30).

O Jesu, grant me by Thy power to abide faithfully in the work of Thy service, that I may hereafter enter into the joy which belongs to Thee, my only Lord.

My son, thou seest how I was proved in order that I might be glorified as the Servant of the Lord. Thou must be prepared in like manner to suffer all things. Count nothing

hard, whether it be in mind, body, or estate, that thou mayest have to bear. The reward shall be abundantly sufficient.

O Lord Jesu, all that I can suffer is nothing compared with that which Thou hast borne. Yet can I not do that which is required of me unless Thou give me help.

Fear not, My son. I will not put more upon thee than I will strengthen thee to bear. In every difficulty I will be with thee if thou wilt look to Me. Trust in Me, and I will strengthen thee to serve Me. Obey Me, and thou shalt find that I will not fail thee.

O Lord, other lords have had dominion over us ; but by Thee only will we make mention of Thy name. They are dead. They shall not live. Thy people shall serve Thee, seek Thee, praise Thee, and live for ever. Yea, though we were dead, by nature dwelling in dust, Thy dead body shall raise us with itself. Living, the nations of the earth shall cast us out, for they hate them that serve Thee. Dead, the earth shall cast us out, for death cannot bind those whom Thou, the Son of God, hast by Thy death made free.

MEDITATION XVI.

The Firstborn of God.

Beginning from Moses and from all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.—St. Luke xxiv. 27.

1. THE FAITHFUL WITNESS.

THE SON of God came into the world to conquer Satan by suffering, and by suffering to show Himself the true Servant of the Lord. His obedience would be meritorious before the Father according to the endurance of suffering which it involved.

By this suffering He would also bear witness to the truth. As Jesus said to Pilate, 'For this cause came I into the world, that I might bear witness unto the truth' (John xviii. 37). In so doing He was fulfilling the prophetic office as a teacher sent from God. St. Luke wrote of all things which Jesus began both to do and teach (Acts i. 1). He is the Truth, and makes known the Truth by the manifestation of Himself.

The early prophets were types of Christ, who was infinitely more than a Prophet, being Himself the very Incarnate Word. He would speak not as a prophet, needing revelations from God, but as the Son of God, partaking in all the Father's actions, for 'whatsoever the Father doeth the same doeth the

Son likewise' (John v. 19). Thus would He as 'the Servant of the Lord deal prudently, and be exalted and extolled, and be very high' (Is. lii. 18). He is like unto Moses as a prophet, because His human nature is as that of Moses, but He is infinitely superior to Moses, inasmuch as Moses became a prophet by gifts received from Him, and those gifts which are the foundation of truth to Moses and all who have borne the prophetic office are essentially inherent in His Person. He is the Truth.

He then who is the Truth came in the form of man to bear witness unto the truth by the manifestation of Himself.

All created intelligences have been formed to bear witness unto the truth according to their several measures. The Son of God bears witness according to the infinity of His eternal wisdom.

Others fail even of accomplishing the limited requirements of their position. He is ever true in word and deed to His ministry. He cannot deny Himself.

The truth of inferior messengers was tested by their sufferings. As they brought a message which was opposed to the natural heart, they had to suffer the consequences of that antagonism in order to substantiate the certainty of their words. 'Which of the prophets did not the fathers persecute; and they slew them which showed before of the coming of the Just One.' And so the men of His day carried on the strife, being themselves 'His betrayers and murderers' (Acts vii. 52).

That therefore came to pass which was inevitable.

He who bore witness to the eternal truth more perfectly than any that were before Him, suffered. If we can 'take the prophets who have spoken in the name of the Lord for an example of suffering affliction and of patience' (James v. 10), much more can we appeal to Him.

But we count them happy which endure. 'Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord, that the Lord is very pitiful and of tender mercy' (James v. 11). Job was an eminent instance of a servant of the Lord raised through suffering to high acceptance with God and final reward. He was much more than an instance, however eminent. He was a type of the coming Servant of the Lord who should be carried through sufferings so much greater to a triumphant end so much more sublime.

Indeed that truth to which Messiah was to bear witness would not be the truth if it were not itself the all-sufficient portion and reward of those who bear witness to it. 'The Lord Himself is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup; He shall maintain my lot' (Ps. xvi. 5). No inferior reward could be a recompence. Everything short of this fellowship in the Divine Substance would be only a veil obscuring the truth. The reward therefore of the Servant of the Lord as witness to the truth was that for which Jesus prayed. 'Now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was' (John xvii. 5).

Creation was as a vesture hiding the Divine glory. The Son of God came to bear witness to the

truth of the eternal life hidden with God. In suffering ministry in thus making known the Father has its reward in the exaltation of His manhood the glory of the Father's throne. So was it in accordance with the truth of the work which the Son of man had to do, that 'God made that same Jesus whom the Jews crucified, both Lord and Christ' (Acts ii. 36).

O Jesu, Thou Incarnate Word of Truth, make Thyself manifest in me that I may bear witness to the truth, not through earthly similitudes alone, those who spake before Thy coming, but with demonstration of the Spirit and with power, as being partaker of Thy Divine life.

My son, abide in Me and let My word abide in thee, for if thou holdest fast the truth the truth shall make thee free.

O Lord, help me to keep Thy commandments without spot, unrebukable, until Thine appearing even as in the days of Thy flesh Thou didst witness Thy good confession before Pontius Pilate, and to come hereafter in the glory of the Father and to dwell in the light which no man can approach unto, whom no man hath seen nor can see. To Thee be glory for ever.

2. THE PASCHAL LAMB.

The suffering and victory of this Elect Servant the Eternal Son, was specially set forth by Moses in the ordinance of the Paschal lamb. We are not

think that God spared the houses of the Israelites for the sake of the blood of the lamb which was sprinkled upon the doorposts. That blood was but the type of the redeeming blood of the true Lamb of God who in after time should take away the sins of the world.

When God slew the firstborn of Egypt, it was because Pharaoh refused to let Israel go, whereas God had said unto him 'Let My son go that he may serve Me; and if thou refuse to let him go, behold I will slay thy son, even thy firstborn' (Ex. iv. 22).

The redemption of Israel from Egypt was therefore by reference to the firstborn of God with whom that nation was in some matters specially identified. What then was the principle of identification?

Israel was not by nature the firstborn of God. That nation was not more ancient than any of the families of mankind, for all are made of one blood, all have one father, Adam.

Israel was regarded as the firstborn of God because that nation was marked out by Divine predestination as the home of the Incarnate Son. It was of them that Christ as concerning the flesh should come (Rom. ix. 5).

Had the children of Israel been delivered by reason of any prerogative naturally inherent in themselves there would have been no need of any sacramental indication such as the blood of the Paschal lamb. The angel needed no such sign merely to give information. That blood was the mark by which those who sprinkled it should claim the protection of the coming Messiah. Israel needed that intervention of

the promised Conqueror for their deliverance as much as any other nation of the world could need it.

All those who sprinkled that blood claimed the covenant of promise made to Abraham that Christ should be born of his descendants. They were identified with Him because His human nature was actually at the time existing in their bodies. Although all of them would not individually be found in the line of his progenitors, yet each had a share in the Blessing of this parentage because they were all joined in the solidarity of one national covenant with God, having this promise for its basis. The whole nation were joined together in one covenant with God. All of them had this prerogative of the Divine parentage entrusted to them as an inheritance in common. God in His Divine prescience knew which individuals of the nation should actually be the physical channels of transmitting that humanity, but the physical transmission would not convey the grace unless there were an acceptance of the covenant with God as an act of the individual will. Thus it was that the blood of the coming Redeemer needed to be pleaded individually, while yet the sacramental efficacy of that blood gathered the whole nation collectively within its shelter, unless by individual fault they broke away from the unity of promise.

The claim of God to regard Israel as His firstborn was therefore a distinct prophecy that the only-begotten Son, the Firstborn of God, should take our nature and become the promised Seed of the woman by being born of that nation.

The Paschal sacrifice was the first act by which the individuals of that nation were called to claim for themselves the promise made to Abraham that in his Seed should all nations of the world be blessed, the first act by which they claimed the protection of the promised Messiah. By their circumcision they were placed within the reach of that covenanted blessing. By sprinkling the blood upon their doorposts they claimed its protection in their hour of need.

But why was the sprinkling of the blood necessary for this Paschal deliverance? And, indeed, why was the shedding of their own blood in circumcision necessary for their admission to the covenant?

The blood of the lamb foreshadowed that Messiah's deliverance would be effected by means of death. It was not the mere accident of consanguinity which made them share Messiah's blessing, nor would He deliver them when He came by the manifestation of Divine vengeance exerted against their oppressors. He would deliver them by death. The oppression into which they had fallen was a penal condition. They had incurred it by sin. They were no more free from sin's inheritance than other nations of the world. Christ, therefore, would deliver them by suffering the penalty of sin. Their own blood shed in circumcision was an acknowledgment that they themselves were born in sin and deserved to die. The blood of the Paschal lamb sprinkled upon the doorposts was an appeal to the Blood of the Redeemer shed on their behalf, and claiming those who were by nature His forefathers according to the flesh as being really by

grace His children according to the power of the Holy Ghost.

How gloriously, then, does the Headship of Messiah shine out in this ancient deliverance. The call out of Egypt was a call to the resurrection-life through participation in the merits of a suffering Redeemer. The voice comes from the Eternal Throne, 'I have called My son out of Egypt.' And whither is He called? Was it said to Moses, 'Ye shall worship God on this mountain?' That could not be the end of the calling. God would descend in terror upon that mountain, and Israel His son would not be permitted to come near (Ex. xix. 21). No. The son was not yet come who could see the Father and live in the joy of that contemplation. The call would find its completeness hereafter. The Psalmist caught the sound of the mysterious voice. It was not hushed until the call was made complete. While that call of God thrilled through his heart, he worshipped his own far-off descendant to whom it was addressed, and wrote the mysterious welcome to which that call at length should grow, 'The Lord said unto my Lord, sit Thou on My Right Hand until I make Thy foes Thy footstool' (Ps. cx. 1).

O Jesu, grant that as I am baptised into Thy death I may be partaker of Thy resurrection.

Look to Me, My son, for I am seated at the right hand of God, there to make intercession for thee, preparing for thee a place as a member of My own Body. Fear not the Egyptian bondage of the world which seems to crush thee. I have

called thee by My name, thou art Mine. Only claim for thyself the privileges of the covenant to which I have admitted thee. Be not conformed to this world, but be transformed according to the renewing of thy mind in union with Myself in glory.

O Jesu, must this tyranny still surround me, even now that Thou art ascended unto the Father? Show me Thy glory. Tell me, O Thou Whom my soul loveth, where Thou feedest Thy flock and makest them to lie down at noon.

O soul most dear to Me, knowest thou not the mysteries of Divine contemplation. If thou wouldst ascend to where I am, go thy way forth by the footsteps of the flock and feed thy kids beside the shepherds' tents. Carry on the work of charity to My needy members in various parts of My Church upon the earth. In acts of love thou art more glorious in My sight than all the company of Pharaoh's horses in their trappings of external splendour.

O Jesu, I know that Thou art present where Thy people are gathered together in Thy name. There will I seek to find Thee, ministering to Thy necessities in Thy suffering members. Thou who gavest Thyself for me wilt not disdain my offering. Here will I pour the spikenard as for Thy feet upon the earth, and Thou in Thy unseen glory wilt not reject the fragrance of the love which Thou hast sanctified for Thine own self.

8. THE INCARNATE WORD.

The Servant of God who would come into the world was not only to bear witness by His suffering. He was to communicate a new life to the perishing race.

The communication of this new life would be a restorative act. In revealing the hope of redemption God called mankind to strive after that destiny for which mankind had been originally created. God created man in His own image. That image would only be a mockery if it did not participate in the Divine Life.

It was to this hope, inherent in man's nature, of sharing the Divine Life that Satan appealed when he spoke against God as if God looked grudgingly upon its accomplishment. Bold, miserable lie! Never had man known the hope of becoming like to God unless God Himself had given it. Such a thought could not have lodged in his breast as a possibility of nature unless it had been there by virtue of the Creator's promise, speaking, however secretly, in the depth of his heart.

By sin man had fallen away from the life of God and consequently from all possibility of having this hope of Divine sonship naturally developed within him. If man was to become perfected in the life of God's Son, it was necessary that God's own Son should become man.

The promise of the Incarnation was thus latent in the promise of a Conqueror by whom man should

be rehabilitated. Nothing short of this would make the victory over Satan complete.

This was the blessing which awaited the seed of Abraham, a true and living sonship towards God. The Divine Blessing was to be disseminated to all the nations of the world as a result of the living reality of this filial covenant between God and the promised Messiah.

The posterity of Abraham were subjected to manifold proofs to see if they would rise up to this heavenly calling. Alas! each fresh probation only served to make their sins abound the more.

Nevertheless the Divine promise could not fail of being eventually accomplished. The destiny for which God at the first created man could not be forfeited for ever. Man's sin may delay God's purposes within the sphere of time: man cannot set aside God's purposes in the sphere of eternity. Those purposes are but the manifestation of His changeless Word. His Word created man and could not fail of bringing man to the end which was originally intended for Him.

As God had said 'Let us make man in our image after our likeness' (Gen. i. 26), the destiny was assured to the race however basely the individuals for many generations might rebel against the Divine bounty and 'judge themselves unworthy of everlasting life' (Acts xiii. 46). No man could claim by nature for himself this promise, but it must nevertheless be eventually fulfilled in some who should be accounted worthy of the heavenly gift.

The call of Abram, with the assurance of the pro-

mise to his Seed, did not warrant all of his posterity in claiming it any more than the original destiny of creation warranted all mankind in such a hope. The promise was made to a supernatural Seed, as all the natural offspring would be found incapable of rising up to the demand. As Isaac was supernaturally born when Abraham's body was no longer capable of yielding natural fruit, so the Seed would be supernaturally born at the end. The original promise to the Seed of the woman was of itself a prophetic indication of Messiah's virgin-birth. God's Son would take upon Himself man's nature, but He would not assume a human personality derived from human procreation.

This truth is indeed found more or less in all the great religions of antiquity. The idea of the religious hero being born of a virgin is not a coincidence between those religions and the religion of Christ. It is found in the midst of their corruptions as a survival of the original truth which is the germ of the Christian revelation.

To this hope of Divine life pledged by God's Word to man the Psalmist appeals in that verse which Jesus quoted when speaking to the Jews, 'I said, Ye are gods, and ye are all the children of the most Highest: but ye shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes' (Ps. lxxxii. 6, 7). God had said this in man's original creation. He had renewed the utterance by the promise to Abraham. He had spoken since then of this Divine Sonship. Alas, His words ever fell upon hearts which could not rise up to their adequate interpretation. The Divine

Sonship was continually blasphemed by being made nothing better than an occasion of carnal boast, as if the chosen nation were the earthly favourites of God instead of being called by this predestination to a special life of witness, obedience, suffering, and faith.

Our Lord Jesus uses this text to point out the necessity of a living Divine Sonship in the mysterious personage whom God would send into the world to be the Seed of the woman and the Heir of Abraham's promises.

Messiah was to come into the world in order to raise mankind to the Divine life. What He was to give to others He must first of all possess inherently within Himself. He could not communicate it by a merely prophetic ministry as a teacher. He was to be the Father of the New Dispensation (Is. ix. 6). He therefore must have the very life of the Creator who at first had spoken the words, 'Let us make man in our image!' The Word of God cannot be broken. It cannot be reduced to the limits of human understanding, nor treated as a fiction of hyperbole. God means what He says. Man must become 'partaker of the Divine nature' (2 Pet. i. 4), although even the chosen nation may for a long time repudiate the offer, so that they perish like other men. The Seed of Abraham will be found at last. The Child must be born who was a Son given from the very Bosom of the Eternal Father. It was therefore no blasphemy if He who came to accomplish God's purpose of love claimed to be the Son of God.

It was to this Son of God that the Paschal lamb

pointed onward. It was the assurance of union with Him which guaranteed to the nation of Israel in Egypt the title of God's own firstborn.

The reality of these inherited truths is made only the more manifest by the blindness of those to whose care the promises were entrusted. The hopes to which their carnal hearts turned aside would have denuded God's word of its true meaning and made God a liar. What seemed to them in their earthliness to be nothing short of blasphemy was necessary for the vindication of God's truth.

O Jesu, Eternal Son of God, Incarnate, have mercy upon me, and as Thou hast called me to partake of Thy Divine nature, grant that I may always act in the power of Thy truth as befits the glory of Thy resurrection.

Take heed, My son, that thou dost not live for that life from which I have redeemed thee, lest thou forfeit that better life which I have called thee to share.

O my Jesu, how can I live worthy of this life?

Thou must live in its power and exercise its gifts in faith, looking to Me. Apart from Me thou canst do nothing, for thou canst not have this life save by union with Me.

O Lord Jesu, Thou art the first-begotten from the dead, and the Prince of the kings of the earth. Raise me along with Thine own self, and suffer me not to be separated from Thee. All earthly powers must fail, but Thy word abideth sure. Thou canst not deny Thyself. O save me for Thy mercy's sake, and help me to bear witness to Thy holy name.

MEDITATION XVII.

The Messianic King.

Beginning from Moses and from all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.—St. Luke xxiv. 37.

1. THE RIGHT OF DIVINE PRIMOGENITURE.

THE claim to be God's firstborn, which was the ground of Israel's deliverance from Egypt, was of itself a claim of royalty. Whether as an individual or as a nation, the firstborn of God must stand supreme amongst all persons and nations of the human race. Therefore God says to Israel, 'Ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests' (Ex. xix. 6)—a phrase which as it afterwards became concentrated in the person of Christ the king, so then again after His Ascension acquired a fresh expansion, comprehending all Christians as His members within the same conception of royalty. Thus St. Peter addresses Christians as taking the place of the earlier Israel, 'Ye are a royal priesthood' (1 Pet. ii. 9).

Kingship and priesthood are distinct, but both are united in Christ.

The natural primogeniture amongst the families of mankind was not of itself the groundwork of Judah's claim. In the case of Cain the natural primo-

geniture had been forfeited. In Noah's family Shem, a younger son, had been raised to the first rank. Esau had sold his birthright. Amongst the sons of Jacob Reuben lost it by his sin. David could not claim it by natural precedence amongst the descendants of Judah. He was chosen thereto by God.

Whence then did this prerogative of Israel arise?

It had a higher origin than could be traced by lineal descent from Adam. The claim of natural relationship had died when Abraham found himself in his old age without a son to be his lawful heir. Isaac was born by a new act of Divine creation, restoring Abraham to the fruitfulness of youth. The nation which sprang from him was therefore in a special manner the child of God, and so the heir of promise. The promise was made to Abraham and his seed, not to all that were born of him, but to the supernatural offspring. The offspring of nature and the offspring of grace were altogether distinct one from the other. The promise to be the heir of the world was not given to all of his children, but only to the supernatural Child.

Israel was thus fitted for the high destiny among the nations which should at some future time be given. He was to sit and reign at the Father's right hand. The people were to expect the blessing by reason of this Divine relationship. 'The Root of Jesse which should stand for an ensign of the nations' (Is. xi. 10), or as St. Paul says, 'He that should rise to reign over the nations,' was not to be born as other men in the world-wide condemnation which followed upon Adam's sin. Even far back, in the person of

Isaac, He springs out of the grave of nature's barrenness by a special interposition of Divine power.

Isaac, therefore, in whom all the nations of the earth should be blest, and Israel his offspring, was the firstborn amongst the sons of men, not by accident of hereditary precedence, but by the dignity of Divine power. He is the Seed of Abraham to whom are made those promises which shall eventually be realised in the one Person who is to sum up in Himself all that belonged to His forefathers. The Messianic promises spread themselves out through the nation, to be at last concentrated in one personal representative, the 'Heir of all things' (Heb. i. 2).

O Jesu, amongst all the sons of men there is none like unto Thee. From the womb of the eternal morning dost Thou come, and gatherest unto Thyself the multitudes who are predestinated to share the kingdom with Thee.]

Fear not, little flock. The birthright is sure. Blessed are the poor in spirit, for the kingdom shall be given you.

O Jesu, Thou art God from everlasting, and with an everlasting love hast Thou called me.

Yea, My son, I change not. Abide thou in My love and thou shalt find that it is new every morning, and what I have promised I will assuredly perform.

O Lord, give me grace to perform that which I have promised unto Thee. Thy faithfulness is sure, but my heart is full of weakness. Thou hast called me out of the world to abide in the glory of Thine

eternal kingdom. Suffer me not to be drawn away from Thee by any false pretences of the world. Keep me as Thine own for ever.

2. THE REJECTION FORETOLD.

It was the presence of the future king diffused throughout the nation of His ancestors which made Balaam exclaim concerning Israel, 'The Lord his God is with him, and the shout of a king is among them' (Num. xxiii. 21). Many a sorrow was to cut down the noble natural growth of Israel's multitude, not only in the proud schismatical Ephraim but even in the more faithful and depressed kingdom of Judah. Even so, however, the purification of heart in Israel would not be complete. At length when Messiah came there should be only a remnant who would receive Him. The message of Messiah's glory was to be set aside by the great bulk of the people. Isaiah prophesied it. 'Go and tell this people, hear ye indeed but understand not; and see ye indeed but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert and be healed' (Is. vi. 9, 10). In anticipation of Israel's blindness Isaiah cries out again: 'Who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see Him there is no beauty that we should desire Him. He

is despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from Him; He was despised and we esteemed Him not' (Is. liii. 1-8).

Sad welcome this for King Messiah! Alas! sin blinds men's eyes against Him. The very sins which made it necessary that He should redeem them make it impossible for them to recognise Him.

Worldliness of heart closes the eye of the soul against the glory of God. The people of Israel must reject Messiah when He comes, for they mind only the things of earth. They scoff at the hope of resurrection. They reject God.

Shebna, the treasurer who was over the house in the days of Hezekiah, is given as the type of these men. Isaiah speaks of him as hewing out for himself a sepulchre on high in the rock. So shall they be who look for the glory of God to be manifested in making a secure home for themselves in this world of the dead. Their home is but a tomb. The glory of the living kingdom is the glory of one whom God has raised out of this world of death. Eliakim, *i.e.* 'Whom God raiseth,' is thus the type of Him. He shall be a Father giving new life to the people, and God will fasten Him as a nail in a sure place whereon all the glory of His father's house, the ancient promises of Abraham, shall be hung. That sure place is not the rock of the dead. If it were He would be no better than Shebna. Nay, He must be removed by Divine power that He may be established in the eternity of Divine glory (Is. xxii. 15-25).

The stability of His kingdom is to be manifested by overthrow ; its vitality by death.

Messiah the king is the Corner-stone, the Nail, the Battlebow, projecting from the hidden depth of Israel's life (Zech. x. 4). Israel has taskmasters also now as of old. Then they came from without : now from within herself. She left Egypt. These shall pass away¹ from her. Her child Messiah, He that seemed to be removed, remains. That whereon Israel relied shall no more be found, and when earthly things are shaken that which is fastened in the secure place of Divine sovereignty shall yet abide for ever.

So shall the Stone which the builders rejected become the Headstone of the corner (Ps. cxviii. 22). They who reject are as the taskmasters which are driven away. He who is rejected remains. He is that Bow which God will fill with arrows from Ephraim, uniting Judah and Joseph together in the renewed might of a heavenly covenant (Zech. ix. 18).

So shall Judah be as the sword of a mighty man (Zech. ix. 18), for the Son of God comes to be the Incarnate king, taking His human nature from thence according to David's words, 'Gird Thee with Thy sword upon Thy thigh, O Thou most mighty' (Ps. xlv. 8).

He who gives might to Judah by the Incarnation will make Ephraim also like a mighty man by the gift of grace (Zech. x. 7). He calls them all around Himself from afar. 'As many as receive Him, to them shall He give power to become the sons of God,' that they may share with Him the promises of Abraham.

¹ See Note at end of Meditation.

Sure are the promises, sure are the threats. The remainder who would not have Him to reign over them must find their momentary triumph pass away, and all those denunciations must be accomplished which Moses uttered. 'It shall come to pass that whosoever will not hearken unto My words which that Prophet shall speak in My name, I will require it of him' (Deut. xviii. 19).

Messiah must therefore be a lawgiver and a Prince greater than Moses, for the law which He gives is to perfect and replace the law which Moses gave, and fulfil what prophets told. He claims the promises as Abraham's Seed. All prophets testified of Him. He is come from the Eternal Father as His Firstborn, His Only-begotten, the Heir of all things, to be the king of Israel, and not of Israel alone but of all the world, for 'out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem, and all nations shall flow unto it' (Is. ii. 1, 2); to Him shall the Gentiles seek.

O Jesu, Thine own people rejected Thee. Blessed be Thy name, for Thou hast called me out of my nothingness to have my part in Thy better covenant, and know Thee as ruling over Thy chosen ones in the power of the Holy Ghost.

Take care that that Spirit is ruling alway in thy heart, making thee conformable to My will.

O Jesu, if other lords have dominion over me how bitter their slavery, but when I give myself to be enslaved to Thee I find myself exulting in Thy freedom. Bind my will to Thine. Let Thy will guide

me. By my religious vows I have chosen Thee as my ruler for ever, and in Thy government I shall find peace for evermore. Whatever I might choose without Thee turns to evil though it seem to be good. In doing my own will I find myself the slave of sin. O Jesu, be Thou my freedom, be Thou my joy. In Thee let me triumph over every enemy.

8. THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ETERNAL KINGDOM THROUGH DEATH.

A king was foretold by Moses, for whom the people would ask. So it came to pass. Saul was given at their desire, but he was not the predestined king. God rejected him. David followed, but the true king was not yet. David was not the true abiding king. God spake to David of a Son which should be given him. In Solomon we see the type, but only the type, of that greater Son of Whom God spoke.

Solomon's wide empire would quickly melt away. David's throne was to be established for ever in Messiah's person. Of Him Isaiah wrote, 'A king shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment' (Is. xxxii. 1). This is the true David the king, the sweet psalmist of Israel. Hear Him speak. 'I will publish the decree whereof the Lord hath said unto Me, Thou art My Son : this day have I begotten Thee' (Ps. ii. 7).

As, however, David did not come to his throne without many years of suffering and shame, so was it to be in a greater degree with Messiah in propor-

tion to the greater dignity both of His Person and His Kingdom.

As Ishmael mocked Isaac, as Esau hated Jacob, so would the fleshly descendants of Abraham scorn and hate this chosen Servant of the Lord. The Book of the Psalms is occupied in setting forth the opposition which He would have to meet. But He shall triumph over all opposition. Suffering in every age, He goes forth conquering and to conquer. The hosts that oppose Him shall at last come bending down before Him. Surely they must be left many days to suffer for their rebellion against Him, but 'afterward shall they return and seek the Lord their God and David their king, and shall fear the Lord and His goodness in the latter days' (Hos. iii. 5). See how their rebellion was foretold, and watch for them to be converted unto Christ.

As it was of old, so is it now. We must look for rejection and outward disgrace to precede the final submission of the worldly heart and the spiritual glory of Christ's kingdom.

Lot in his captivity, as Abram in his power and Melchisedec in his priestly sovereignty, typifies Christ. Abram delivered Lot when the five kings were overthrown and he was taken prisoner. Abram's Seed is the lofty Father who delivers the righteous captive. He redeems mankind. He rescues those that belong to Him. He is the Heir of Abraham. He is the Priest after the order of Melchisedec. He is Abraham's Son after the flesh. He is the Servant of the Lord, the Son of God, in such a sense as no man before Him had ever been. So is He the King

of Righteousness, and it is this higher nature of Divine righteousness which makes Him to be anointed and blesses the actions of His humanity. The Spirit of the Lord rests upon Him because the Lord hath anointed Him (Is. lxi. 1). This is the Prince of whom Ezekiel writes that He shall enter in by the eastern gate into the sanctuary. No one shall enter into the Temple of the Lord by the eastern gate coming down from heaven but only He. Truly He is the Son of God, He is 'the Lord, the God of Israel' (Ezek. xlv. 1-3). As Melchisedec He blesses. As Abram He conquers and is blest. As Lot He has suffered to bear our humiliation under the tyranny of evil, coming in the likeness of sinful flesh, going into captivity as one of the inhabitants of Sodom.

He is the true Isaac, the Seed of Abraham, in whom all the nations of the world shall be blest. For them He wins the blessing, as by His own glorious predestination He inherits it. And how is this blessing to be won? It is by suffering. We see Isaac bound upon the altar, giving himself up to die in the knowledge that God would raise him from the dead. So must Messiah give Himself to die. There is no other law whereby he can enter into his kingdom. Isaac died in mystical oblation alone. Messiah must die and rise from death in very truth of outward fact, in order that the fulness of His Divine victory might be known. The oblation of Isaac was as it were suspended until in the person of Messiah as the true Lamb of God it should be made complete.

Did the women tell how Jesus had risen from the

grave while it was yet dark? Surely this was fore-signified when Samson 'lay till midnight, and arose at midnight and took the doors of the gates of the city and carried them up to the top of an hill that is before Hebron' (Jud. xvi. 8). He was compassed by his enemies, and effected a victory in right royal strength. Even so Messiah, whom David represented in one Psalm suffering as if forsaken of God, is presently seen demanding admission within the gates of hell that He may enter as a conqueror and set His people free. (Ps. xxii.-xxiv.)

How lately has Jesus been seen entering Jerusalem in the sacred pageant of the march from Bethany. Thus He showed Himself as King, if men had eyes to see. As the king of Judah He rode 'upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass,' for so had Zechariah prophesied. In coming to claim His kingdom He was careful to use the outward signs which the prophets of Judah had given. He came as king, yet was it not the earthly Israel which should accept His sovereignty. He would 'speak peace to the heathen' (Zech. ix. 10), and He would show mercy upon the forefathers of the ancient covenant, 'delivering them from the pit wherein is no water' (Zech. ix. 11). The heathen, the dead, would rejoice at Him. The earthly Israel would repudiate His visitation. He Himself must descend into the pit ere He could rise thence.

Yet was His resurrection sure. The disciples had sought for their Master in the empty grave. They must not wonder that He was gone. Reuben had looked into the empty pit and found not the body of Joseph. Joseph was sold into Egypt. Reigning

there he saved his brethren. Even so we are safe under the sovereignty of the Crucified. The disciples going to Emmaus had no cause for sorrow nor for fear. He whom they sought was risen, as the angels said unto the women. He was risen to be a deliverer, reigning upon the throne of God.

He was risen that He might enter into His glory. Messiah has been cut off, but not for Himself. Alas for them that rebelled! 'The people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary' (Dan. ix. 26). But the God of Heaven has 'set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed: it shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever' (Dan. ii. 44).

O Jesu, let me suffer with Thee now ! O Jesu, let me be Thine in the day when Thou makest up Thy jewels. O Jesu, remember me when Thou comest.

NOTE to p. 178.

The words 'came forth' or rather 'goes forth' do not apply to the three former. They are objects stationary and permanent. These words apply to the evil taskmasters who came forth from God for temporary anger, but shall not continue. Messiah is from Him, but is evermore abiding in Him, one with Him. 'From Him is the Cornerstone: from Him the Nail: from Him the Battlebow: from Him at the same time every taskmaster makes his exodus.' Israel came forth out of Egypt from his taskmasters. Every oppressor that rises up in Israel shall go away and come to nought. The kingdom of Messiah remaineth.

MEDITATION XVIII.

The Great High Priest.

Beginning from Moses and from all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.—St. Luke, xxiv.-xxvii.

1. HIS DIVINE CHARACTER.

THE Divine primogeniture which is Messiah's title to be king is no less His title to be priest. 'The slave abideth not in the house for ever, but the son abideth ever.' The creature has no original right to address God as Father, nor is any entitled to claim the covenanted relationship of priesthood who cannot use that title. Man is called to the priesthood of creation because he is created in the image of God, so as to live by the inbreathed Spirit of God. The Son of man is the true Priest because He is the Son of God.

The priesthood exercised by man was only imperfect in its character at the beginning, for the Divine sonship, even of Adam, was only imperfect. His descendants cannot any longer claim even that imperfect relationship of filial life which did belong to Adam before the fall.

No outward anointing could convey true priesthood. No outward designation, even by God Himself,

could convey more than the bare privilege of outwardly addressing God. There might be various degrees of authority belonging to such approach, but the approach never could be real for it never could be vital. The created life must always be immeasurably distant from the life of the Creator. There could be no real communion between the two.

The destiny of mankind therefore waited for its full development until the Son of man should come, who should be a true Priest, being Himself the very Son of God.

The priesthood of the intervening ages was a symbol of that which He at length should exercise.

Melchisedec was a type of Him in Whom the righteousness of the Eternal King should shine out in solitary dignity to glorify a world renewed in the joyousness of heavenly peace, the Sun of Righteousness who should at length arise with healing on his wings.

He blessed Abram, and that blessing was of itself an assurance of the Divine life marking out the Seed of Abram for a priesthood greater than his own. If the Seed of Abram was to bless all the nations of the world He must be a priest, and without such Divine life there could be no Divine priesthood, no world-wide blessing.

In Abram therefore we see the humanity of the future Conqueror exhibited, and in Melchisedec we see the type and the assurance of the priesthood with which that humanity is to be glorified, the Divine nature which is to consecrate the Seed of Abram as a royal priest. In whatever sense Melchisedec was

greater than Abram so as to be able to claim from him the tithes of all, the blessing which he uttered would have stopped short of Divine reality if it were not to expand into the fulness of Divine life. A blessing which did not guarantee the communication of the Divine nature could be only transitory at the best. A blessing which conveyed so great an assurance could have but one impersonation. In the Seed of Abram should the world be blessed, because He should not only reign over men with a Divine authority, but act on man's behalf towards God as the High Priest of the race by reason of the fellowship of the Eternal Spirit, as the Son of God with power.

Henceforth kings and priests would be types of Messiah, each in his own order, but the priesthood and the kingdom would not be joined in one. No one should be the complete type of Messiah in His twofold character.

So it came to pass at the Exodus; God led the people forth by the hand of Moses and Aaron. Moses forfeited the priestly half of the redemptive character by his acknowledgment of his own incompetency. 'The law was weak through the flesh.' Moses then represents the Divine sovereignty: Aaron is spoken of as his mouth, exercising the priesthood. Aaron did indeed receive his investiture at the hands of Moses, but Moses could not perform the acts of Aaron.

So would the royalty of the Divine primogeniture constitute essentially the foundation of Messiah's claim to approach God in reality and truth on behalf of the people over whom He reigned.

The promise therefore to the seed of Abraham is that 'in Him shall all nations of the earth be blessed.' They shall not only be ruled by His power but blessed by His intercession.

If the second Psalm tells us that the Eternal Father will give to His Son all the ends of the earth for his possession, the seventy-second assures us of the priestly character of the rule which He shall exercise. His kingdom shall be the extension of the kingdom of Melchisedec. The whole world shall become Salem beneath His sovereignty, being renewed in righteousness after the image of that Creator. 'The mountains shall bring forth peace unto the people, and the hills in righteousness' (Ps. lxxii. 8).

The promise to David's son was that upon himself should the priestly mitre flourish (Ps. cxxxii. 18). Thus was He at length to sit upon the right hand of God, and be acknowledged as the High Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec (Ps. cx. 4).

So we find Zechariah recalling the ancient expectation in the days when prophecy was drawing to its close. 'Behold the man whose name is the Branch' (Zech. vi. 12). 'From under Himself shall He make branches to sprout forth,'¹ as Jesus said to His apostles 'I am the Vine, ye are the branches' (John xv. 1). 'He shall be a priest upon His throne, and the counsel of peace shall be between them both' (Zech. vi. 18).

It would seem to the eye of man that this royal priesthood had failed. He would be a ruler in the

¹ 'He shall grow up out of his place' (A.V.).

midst of powerful enemies. The security, however, of this covenant would not be vitiated by any outward appearances of helplessness amidst defiant enemies. God would establish the kingdom and fulfil the prayer.

This priesthood was established with a Divine oath. It is no merely external institution such as might belong to any chosen nationality like that of Israel. This royal priesthood is founded upon a Divine oath, for it has its very essence from the Incarnation of the Divine Word. It is not founded upon a transitory human relationship, but upon the eternity of the unchangeable God. This Divine sonship of the Word is the Rock upon which the Church is built. The royal priesthood is therefore to be the eternal inheritance of the only-begotten. He stands out as the undisputed Priest, to whom the Father says, 'Thou art my Son: this day have I begotten Thee' (Ps. ii. 7):—of whom consequently He also says, 'He shall call Me, Thou art My Father, My God, and the rock of My salvation' (Ps. lxxxix. 26).

The exaltation of this sovereign to be the Father of the world to come is not a reward of merit as a matter of degree whereby He is superior to others, but of nature, whereby He is altogether different from them.

Therefore also the Church of Christ stands alone amidst the religions of the world. Her claim does not rest upon the superiority of her teaching but upon the Divine character of her Head, which gives her a Divine life such as no other religion can possibly share.

The righteousness which this priesthood conveys

is infinitely greater than that which Scribes and Pharisees could recognise. It is the righteousness of God. The sacrifices which this Melchisedec orders are sacrifices of living righteousness.

O Jesu, as Thou callest me to minister in Thy name, grant that I may always reverence the Divine glory of the acts which are performed in Thy name.

O My son, how often dost thou minister at My altar with no thoughts higher than those of earth. If thou wilt minister worthily of Me, thou must lift up thy heart to Me and behold Me ministering at the right hand of God.

Alas ! O Lord, that I should ever approach Thine altar without remembering the Divine glory of Thy mediatorial kingdom.

Look up to Me, My son, so shalt thou minister My salvation. My people fail to see Heaven opened when thou standest at the altar, but the fault is in thyself.

O Blessed Jesu, truly the acts of Thy priesthood cannot be performed in any other power than that whereby Thou Thyself performest them, even the power of the Holy Ghost.

Yea, My son, I call thee not to minister by any merely outward privilege as was given to Aaron. I call thee near to Me in the power of the life-giving Spirit.

O Lord, truly this is a living sacrifice which I am called to present, even Thine own living Self in the power of the Spirit of Life. Help me to live thereby.

2. THE OBLATION OF HIMSELF.

When Melchisedec came forward to bless Abram, we are told that he brought forth bread and wine. These were the adjuncts of the sacrifice wherewith he gave the blessing. They are mentioned because they would continue to be used when the bleeding victims of imperfect sacrifice should no more be required. Of the priesthood of Messiah's time it is written, 'There shall be an heap of corn upon the earth high among the hills' (Ps. lxxii. 16). The corn and the wine and the oil shall bear Jezreel (Hos. ii. 22) as the divinely appointed means of giving efficacy to Christian prayers, for Jezreel is the 'true seed of God.'

There was, however, to be a better victim offered by the new priesthood than Melchisedec could bring, or Aaron afterwards. In those sacrifices God found no pleasure. The oblation which the Divine Priest was to offer was Himself. This was immediately manifested in the Seed of Abraham when the patriarch offered up his son, his only son Isaac (Gen. xxii. 12). In the person of Isaac the whole oblation of Abraham's Seed was accomplished. Yet in him it was not perfected. Abraham knew that he should receive Isaac back from death, for he was to be the channel of blessing to all the world. In that sacrificial death it was impossible that Abraham's seed could perish. From Isaac was to spring a mighty progeny, and as Abraham told his son when he went to make the offering, 'God will provide Himself a lamb.'

The history tells us of the ram caught in the

thicket by the horns which Abram offered instead of his son (Gen. xxii. 18). We are not however to think that this was the lamb of which Abraham spoke. That ram sufficed for the time then present, but it was only to occupy the place until the Seed of Abraham should once more be given up to die.

Isaac's deliverance from a death which he was willing to undergo was to be followed by Messiah's deliverance from a death actually endured. This was the Lamb which God would provide. God would send His Son to take upon Him the seed of Abraham and to be the propitiation for the sins of the whole world. The Seed of Abraham was to be a Priest who should draw near to God in very truth. That Priest must leave this world and go to the Father by dying. He could not accomplish the Divine approach proper to His priesthood in any other way. Not by the blood of animals would He enter into a symbolic sanctuary, but with His own blood He would enter into the true. So the LXX. rightly caught the sense of David's words, 'A body hast Thou prepared me.' This body He must offer, becoming obedient unto death.

The Seed of Abraham would once again after Isaac's time be concentrated in a personal representative who should be both king and 'priest, should offer himself as the true and acceptable oblation. This is that 'Messiah the prince' of whom Daniel afterwards prophesied (Dan. ix. 25) that He should be 'cut off,' and 'cause the sacrifice and the oblation' of the Mosaic ritual 'to cease,' by the substitution of His own more perfect offering.

Once offered by the way of death, His Body would then be a perfect oblation to be offered perpetually in the glory of the Divine Life. The death would never be repeated. The oblation would never cease.

So truly must Christ suffer if He was to fulfil His appointed office. Thus suffering He should enter into His glory. Having taken upon Himself our nature He must share our suffering and our reproach. He is the true Job, the oppressed one, and He humbled Himself along with the transgressors whose sin He bore. Elihu, vindicating Job, typifies Messiah no less than Job the sufferer. 'He is my God,' son of Barachel the God-blest, but He is the Buzite, the despised one, for he fails not to bear man's shame, and yet He is of the kindred of Ram, the lofty one, being glorious in the truth of the lofty covenant as the divinely constituted Mediator.

O Jesu, most perfect Victim, laying down the life of earth and living evermore by the power of God, help me to live in the power of Thy grace while I present the memorial of Thy redemption.

My son, I call thee to present My oblation of Myself unto the Father. Take heed that thou dost offer thine own self in the reality of Divine truth.

O Jesu, how wonderful is the merit of Thy sacrifice, whose lifegiving power can even make my offering of myself to be acceptable to God.

Consider well thine unworthiness, but distrust not the efficacy of that oblation whereon I call thee to feed. As thou feedest thereon I

make thy darkness to be light. Thy nakedness is clothed with glory by the radiance which my indwelling Spirit communicates as thou dost feed upon My flesh.

O Lord, in Thine own glory I draw near, and my vileness passes away. Hide me in Thy bosom. Present me unto the Father purified in Thine own self. I bring Thee as my ransom, and Thou shalt bring me as Thy prize.

8. THE DIVINE ACCEPTANCE.

Though Christ was thus to suffer, yet none the less surely would He afterwards enter into His glory.

If Isaac foresignified His crucifixion being bound, not less did he foresignify His resurrection by the fact of His deliverance. It was on the third day that Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw the place afar off (Gen. xxii. 4), the place of which God had told him, the place of Divine acceptance and deliverance.

The number three is so constantly expressive of Divine perfection that it seems unnecessary to repeat reiterated prophecies of Messiah's deliverance after three days. Three days give completeness to all Divine actions by reason of the triune character of the Divine nature. In God's works there is a triplicity which is the external indication of His own interior relationships.

Three days' journey into the wilderness was the limit of distance proposed to Pharaoh (Ex. iii. 18). Thus was signified the three days' interval between Messiah's departure from the Egypt of the world and

His entrance upon the covenanted glory which began with His resurrection.

Three days and nights was Jonah in the whale's belly, and so must the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

His resurrection must therefore take place on the second day of unleavened bread if He was to die at the time when the Paschal lamb was slain, and this day was marked out in type thereof, for 'on the morrow after the sabbath the priest must wave the sheaf of the firstfruits to be accepted before the Lord' (Lev. xxiii. 11).

Thus was the resurrection of Christ marked by a double evidence; the third day from the Paschal sacrifice, the second of the feast.

The third day was the day of resurrection; but what was the power whereby Messiah should rise? This is the question which the dying patriarch asked.

Jacob prophesied of Judah that his brethren should offer him praise, by which he meant Divine homage, for the word 'Judah' is appropriated to the praise which is due to God (Gen. xlix. 8). He therefore looked forward to the days of Messiah, and spake of Him. 'He stooped down,' humbling Himself to become man. 'He couched as a lion.' This second word we may understand of His lying down in the grave. 'Who shall rouse Him up?' We have already had the answer in the name of Eliakim, 'God shall raise Him up:' and David speaks with confidence, 'Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer Thy Holy One to see corruption' (Ps. xvi. 10).

It is the Divine personality which raises the human nature. The Beloved is introduced in the Canticles addressing the humanity which is espoused to Him, 'O my dove, thou art in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the stairs. Arise, My love, My fair one, and come away' (Cant. ii. 18).

In the manhood He appeals to the Triune Godhead. 'Thou, Jehovah, art My glory and the lifter up of Mine head. I laid me down and slept, I awaked, for the Lord sustained me. Arise, Jehovah, save Me, O My God, for Thou hast smitten all Mine enemies upon the cheek-bone. Salvation belongeth unto Jehovah' (Ps. iii. 8, 5, 7).

Zechariah saw how the golden candlestick was fed by the two olive trees, and the angel said unto him, 'These are the two anointed ones that stand by the Lord of the whole earth' (Zech. iv. 14). These seem to indicate the two offices which belong to Messiah as king and as priest. He who is here seen as the Candlestick is the same who in the New Testament is seen standing in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks. That which is done in His Church is done primarily in Himself. His triumph over the powers of death is not the triumph of unaided human perfection, but the triumph of Divine life by the power of the indwelling Spirit. 'Not by power, nor by might, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts' (Zech. iv. 6). So Isaiah has already written: 'The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me, because the Lord hath anointed Me: I will greatly rejoice in the Lord: My soul shall be joyful in My God, for He hath clothed me with the garments of

salvation, He hath covered Me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh Himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels' (Is. lxi. 1, 10). He who speaks these words in exultation in the power of the Holy Ghost is the same who has been seen as but a little one, the feeble Child of earth (Is. lx. 22), yea, the servant of the Lord, 'whom man despiseth, whom the nation abhorreth.' To Him 'thus saith the Lord, In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and I will give thee for a covenant of the people, to raise up the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages,' as the priest, the minister of the Most High (Is. xlix. 8).

Messiah's resurrection is an assurance of resurrection to all His people, who shall live by the Holy Ghost even as He does. 'Thy dead men shall live, together with My dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing ye that dwell in dust, for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out her dead' (Is. xxvi. 19). In the life-giving priesthood of Messiah the desolation of earth shall become beautiful as the inheritance of the kingdom of heaven.

O Jesu, how shall I praise Thee for Thy goodness? Thy gifts of grace are more than the heart of man can tell.

Come unto Me, O My son, and bring to Me those whom I have given in charge to thee. Seek righteousness from Me, that thou mayest offer to the Lord an offering such as He will accept, that I may be glorified in thee.

O Lord Jesu, I tremble to lay hold upon Thy holy gifts. I am unworthy.

My son, thou art unworthy in thyself, but in Me thou shalt be accepted. From Me is thy fruit found.

O Jesu, Thou great High Priest, who makest the new heavens and the new earth to remain eternally, as Thou raisest me up by the power of Thy resurrection, stablish me in faithfulness by the fellowship of Thy Holy Spirit. Yea, make me fruitful, that in all my ministering the Seed and the Name of Israel may remain before God, and my sinfulness may be purged away by Thy holy fire which shall make the oblation to go up with acceptance upon Thine altar continually.

MEDITATION XIX.

The Shepherd of Israel.

Beginning from Moses and from all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.—St. Luke xxiv. 27.

1. THE DIVINE CARE.

THE first of God's chosen ones comes before us in holy Scripture in the character of a shepherd. It is Abel. Moreover he is a shepherd who dies for the witness of God which was involved in his relation to the sheep. He was the servant of God sealing his testimony with his blood. He was not himself high priest, but he supplied an intimation of the coming Mediator in that it belonged to him to supply the victim necessary for the sacrifice, while Cain supplied the vegetable adjuncts of the oblation.¹ It was necessary that Cain should seek an acceptable offering from Abel's flock, but he would not do so. Therefore he slew Abel who kept them. This first sufferer was a type of a greater Shepherd who would lay down His life for the sheep.

As time then went on, Messiah was to be manifested as the Shepherd of Israel. This was the presence which led the children of Israel out of Egyptian bondage, dwelling between the cherubim in the tabernacle (Ps. lxxx. 1). At a time still later,

¹ See Note at end of Meditation.

when Israel's heart returned to Egypt, Nebuchadnezzar would array himself with the land of Egypt, as a shepherd wrapping his garment about him, and going forth in peace (Jer. xliii. 12), but that sublime ease wherewith the vengeance was executed was indeed only a token of the Divine Shepherd's power, who whilst watching over Israel could act towards her enemies under the assumed form of the heathen conqueror. Yes! in every age the seed of Messiah, the generation of the Lord, shall declare His righteousness, the mighty work that He hath done for their deliverance (Ps. xxii. 81), taking up this sweet and tender metaphor as the symbol of relationship, 'The Lord is my Shepherd' (Ps. xxiii. 1).

It is the special designation of a Divine Presence. 'Behold the Lord God will come with strong hand, and His arm shall rule for Him' (Is. xl. 10). That Arm of the Lord which shall be revealed to faithful eyes, though hidden from the carnal hearts, is none other than the Servant of the Lord. 'His reward is with Him and His recompence before Him.' His own peculiar people are the wages which He hath purchased to Himself, as Jacob their forefather purchased not only his wives but the flocks of Laban by his shepherd toil (Gen. xxx. 28). So will the arm of the Lord watch over Israel. 'He will feed His flock like a shepherd. He shall gather the lambs with His arm and carry them in His bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young' (cf. Gen. xxxiii. 18), bringing them to the paternal inheritance in the land of Canaan, which already in the command which Jacob received in Syria was

designated by implication as the land of Immanuel. He brings His flock even to Salem, i.e. to 'peace,' to the altar which bears God's name, El-elohe-Israel (Gen. xxxi. 8; xxxiii. 18, 20); or, as the passage may be otherwise rendered, he brings them in peace and security,¹ in the perfect life of the resurrection.

For a long interval the promises made to David were in suspense. The shepherds of his line had 'scattered' the people, leading them away from God, so that they were outcasts. God therefore had 'set up other shepherds over them to feed them' from time to time. This, however, did not interfere with the sure promise of 'Him whose right it is' to shepherd them (Ezek. xxi. 27). To Him therefore Jeremiah pointed. 'Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a king shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In His days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is His name whereby He shall be called, The Lord our righteousness' (Jer. xxiii. 1-6).

So is the righteous Branch of David the true Shepherd of Israel.

The sheep were His all through the time when by negligence of the successive shepherds they were scattered. 'As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered, so will I seek out My sheep, and will deliver them

¹ Probably this is the meaning of the word 'Shalem,' although it is rendered in the Authorised Version, and by many ancient authorities, as if it were a proper name. There does not seem to be any place answering to this name.

out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day. And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even My servant David; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd. And I the Lord will be their God, and My servant David a prince among them; I the Lord have spoken it. And I will raise up for them a plant of renown' ['that I may be glorified' (Is. lx. 21)], 'and they shall be no more consumed with hunger in the land, neither bear the shame of the heathen any more. Thus shall they know that I the Lord their God am with them, and that they, even the house of Israel, are My people, saith the Lord God' (Ezek. xxxiv. 12, 23, 24, 29, 30).

O Jesu, how tenderly and how powerfully dost Thou watch over Thy people. Many are the dangers which meet me in the world. My joy is to know that I am Thine.

O My son, amidst many difficulties have I sought thee out. I will strengthen thee when thou art sick. The fat and the strong will I feed with judgment, but I have chosen the weak things of the world to confound the mighty.

O Jesu, surely thou hast chosen me to show forth in me all Thy longsuffering. O what can I do to express my gratitude! I can only acknowledge my helplessness and look up to Thee with the simplicity of love.

That is all that I ask of thee. Look up to Me that thou mayest receive yet more than I have given thee.

O Lord, when I have sinned so grievously wandering from Thy fold, I am ashamed to look to Thee for further help.

O My son, be ashamed of thy shame. Come to Me and I will give thee rest. Be ashamed of distrusting Me. Thou canst not deliver thyself. I will deliver thee.

O Jesu, how can I glorify Thee who hast done so much to deliver me ?

Give Me glory by confessing thy sin, and seek the grace whereby thy sin may be done away, and thyself created anew.

O Jesu, I have indeed gone astray like a sheep that is lost. O seek Thy servant, for I will not henceforth forget Thy commandments.

2. THE SHEPHERD REPUDIATED.

In coming out of Egypt the Angel of God's Presence was the Shepherd who led them. He was full of sympathy with them, but they clave not to Him. 'In all their affliction He was not their adversary, but the Angel of His presence saved them : in His love and in His pity He redeemed them ; and He bare them and carried them all the days of old. But they rebelled, and vexed His holy Spirit : therefore He was turned to be their enemy, and He fought against them. Then He remembered the days of old, Moses, and His people, saying, Where is He that brought them up out of the sea with the Shepherd of His flock ? where is He that put His holy Spirit within Him ?' (Is. lxiii. 8-11). They were warned of the

consequences if they rebelled against this presence. 'Beware of Him, and obey His voice, provoke Him not; for He will not pardon your transgressions: for My Name is in Him' (Exod. xxiii. 21).

That Shepherd of Israel is come now to lead His people out of a worse bondage than the Egyptian's, but though 'He came unto His own, His own received Him not.'

The rejection was foretold by Zechariah, and its consequences. 'Then said I, I will not feed you: that that dieth, let it die; and that that is to be cut off, let it be cut off; and let the rest eat every one the flesh of another. And I took my staff, even Beauty, and cut it asunder, that I might break my covenant which I had made with all the people' (Zech. xi. 9, 10).

What return was the shepherd to have for ministering to them in the name of the Lord?

It was free to the people to give Him His hire or no. 'They weighed for His price thirty pieces of silver.' Such a payment was a greater contumely than an entire refusal. He 'took the thirty pieces of silver, and cast them to the potter in the house of the Lord,' or perhaps, 'according to the command of the Lord' (Zech. xi. 13).

The prophet then plainly foresignified the final rupture between the good Shepherd of Israel and the unfaithful people. Whether the chief priests acted unwittingly or in bravado when they agreed with Judas to give thirty pieces of silver as the price of the blood of Jesus we cannot tell. We know how exactly this transaction was fulfilled.

The rejection of the Shepherd of Israel who should come in place of Moses had indeed been intimated from the very first, for God along with the promise had uttered His denunciations against those who should reject that Messenger. God, in so doing, did not threaten merely to cause empty fright. If God threatens it is because He knows there will be some on whom the doom must be executed. 'I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren like unto thee, and will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak unto them all that I command Him. And it shall come to pass that whosoever will not hearken unto His words which He shall speak in My name, I will require it of him' (Deut. xviii. 18, 19).

So was it then to be with Judah. The nation, alas! would not believe the report (Is. liii. 1). They would refuse the waters of Shiloah (Is. viii. 6), the good Shepherd whom God would send in His name, meek and lowly of heart. The great bulk of the people would be cut off. Only a remnant would return, as was signified by Shearjashub the prophet's son. Previous captivities prepared the way as types for the great captivity of sin holding the nation back from God. The covenant therefore between God and His people at large would be broken until 'the remnant of Israel and such as are escaped of the house of Jacob shall no more stay upon' the power of the world which God had used to 'smite them, but shall stay upon the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, in truth, and the remnant shall return, even the remnant of Jacob, unto the mighty God,' the Shepherd whom

they had forsaken (Is. x. 20, 21). The remnant which came back from previous captivities had the presence of the promised Seed within it as the central principle of vitality. When that Seed should come all else must perish.

It had accordingly been prophesied, and in the Gospel narrative we find the prophecy fulfilled, that Messiah must indeed be left alone. Even those who were ready to receive Him would be unable to cling to Him. The nation must be reduced to the personal unit, in order to develop into fresh spiritual life from Him, the Shepherd of Israel, the Incarnate God.

'Awake, O sword,' says God by Zechariah, 'against My Shepherd, and against the man that is My fellow, saith the Lord of hosts. Smite the Shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered' (Zech. xiii. 7).

We know how they all forsook Him and fled.

O Jesu, Thou great Shepherd of the sheep, call me to follow Thee. Surely though mine eyes be holden that I cannot see Thee, yet I shall know Thy voice, and if Thou callest I shall be strengthened to come after Thee.

Yea, My son, My voice gives strength. Hearken and consider. Incline thine ear, and forget thy father's house. So shalt thou be detached from the world and follow Me in the regeneration.

O my Jesu, greatly do I rejoice at the sound of Thy voice. The people of old heard Thee not, for they were not Thy sheep, but Thou hast given me ears to hear. O let me hear what Thy Spirit saith.

Thou hast called me by Thine own name. As soon as I hear Thee, surely I shall obey Thee. If I hear Thy voice I shall live for ever.

8. THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE REJECTION.

If man breaks his covenant with God, he cannot put a limit to the consequences of his sin. Zechariah had two staves. He brake the covenant between himself and the people under the symbol of the staff of Beauty. He then proceeded to break the symbol of the union of the people amongst themselves, cutting asunder the staff which was called Bands (Zech. xi. 14).

What the prophet symbolised God must effect.

The rejection of Messiah was to be avenged by the disintegration of the Jewish people. As the nation had been broken up into two hostile parts after the days of Solomon, even so, but much more terribly, would they be broken up now that Messiah has been rejected. The fearful feuds which hastened the victory of the Romans were the outcome of this dissolution of all popular coherence.

And now what remains?

The prophet tells of a foolish shepherd who shall be raised up. We may expect these words to find their fulfilment in the days of Antichrist. Jesus prophesied the same. 'If another shall come in his own name, him will ye receive' (St. John v. 43.). This will probably be one of the events at the end of all things.

Jerusalem was to become 'a cup of trembling'

(Zech. xii. 2). So would Messiah be avenged upon them. Alas! what prophecy could be more terribly fulfilled! Who—Christian, Pagan, Infidel, or Jew—does not shudder to think of the fall of Jerusalem?

Are these then the steps whereby Messiah having suffered shall be glorified upon the rebellious nation—disruption, the threatened Antichrist, the terrors of the siege?

There is another glory which, God be praised! remains. Messiah, 'the angel of the Lord,' shall yet be 'before them' as their Shepherd (xii. 8), and the people shall be partakers of the Divine life which He gives. 'The feeble among them shall be as David, and the house of David as God, as the Angel of the Lord before them.' The penitent shall be raised to be partakers of the Divine nature.

Then shall Messiah by His appearance cause the idol shepherd to be smitten. 'His arm shall be clean dried up, and his right eye shall be utterly darkened' (Zech. xi. 17). Then shall the house of David 'look upon Messiah whom they pierced, and mourn for Him as their firstborn' (Zech. xii. 10).

Their Firstborn? How truly He is their Firstborn although they received Him not!

In Him the nation finds its predestined completeness. As all were in Isaac from whom they sprang, so all must be in Messiah, who impersonates their predestined glory and communicates to all of them the life of God. He is God's son, even God's Firstborn (Ex. vi. 22).

It might seem that we had now reached the climax of prophecy. The prophet, however, sud-

denly returns to speak of the suffering of the good Shepherd. From the mourning of spiritual Israel in the last days, He returns to speak of the original sentence of crucifixion.

Why does he do this ?

Having now shown the Divine character and mediatorial power of the good Shepherd, he desires to show that this has happened by the call of God. 'Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd, and against the Man that is My Fellow, saith the Lord of hosts : smite the Shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered : and I will turn Mine hand upon the little ones' (xiii. 7).

By the smiting of the Cross Messiah was to be left alone and all the people scattered from Him.

This we have already considered.

By the same smiting His own Divine life as Fellow with the eternal Father in consubstantial God-head was to be shown.

The sword is called to prove Messiah's immortality, even as at the outset of His ministry Jesus was led up of the Spirit to be tempted of the devil in order to show His impeccability. The sword which took away the natural life could not touch the Divine life. Messiah would be alive even though outwardly dead. His followers would be scattered.

Will their scattering mar Messiah's glory ?

No ! for God 'will turn His hand upon the little ones'—*i.e.* He will take care of them, prove them by holy discipline, not suffer them to be destroyed.

There is yet another reason why, having reached the climax, the prophet returns again.

He would have us understand that the sheep of the good Shepherd must follow along the way of the holy cross. As He was persecuted so must they be, and in the lapse of ages which intervene before the end, the Christian people are seen in the state of trial. 'Two parts shall be cut off and die, but the third part shall be left therein;' and that third part must pass through the fire. So shall the Divine Sonship at length be fully claimed: 'I will say, It is My people: and they shall say, The Lord is my God' (xiii. 8, 9).

Thus shall the eternal relationship between the good Shepherd and the sheep be at length re-established in holy joyousness. 'O Lord, save Thy people: be a Shepherd over them and lift them up for ever' (Ps. xxviii. 9). [Quoted in *Te Deum*.]

O Jesu, surely they that forsake Thee shall perish. Strengthen me that I may lay hold on Thee continually.

My son, I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not.

O my Jesu, how can I dare to let go my hold upon Thee? If I lose Thee for a moment, I perish for ever.

True, My son, yet canst thou not hold Me unless I hold thee. I love Mine own unto the very end, and in that love I keep them, so that none may be lost saving the son of perdition. Refuse not when I call thee. Turn not away from My love. Why wilt thou die, when I have died that thou mayest live?

O my Jesu, in Thee let me die to the world. Blessed are the flock whom Thou feedest on the everlasting hills. O let me be as the dead that I may know the blessedness of the everlasting life. Unutterably sweet, yea, more to be desired than all things else, is death, since Thou hast hallowed it to be the doorway of new life that never shall be lost, the welcome of perfect love wherein Thy flock shall find eternal joy.

NOTE to p. 199.

It is perhaps not sufficiently remembered that the offering of sacrifice was an act involving mutual assistance on the part of Cain and Abel. Abel's animal victim was essential, but Cain's vegetable produce was not less necessary, although forming a subordinate part of the sacrificial offering. The lamb required the meat offering and the drink offering, the Eucharistic adjuncts of the offering of the Lamb of God.

MEDITATION XX.

The Angel of the Covenant.

Beginning from Moses and from all the prophets, he interpreted to them in the scriptures the things concerning himself.—St. Luke xxiv. 27.

1. HIS DIVINE CHARACTER.

THE Shepherd of Israel is also known as the Angel, the Redeemer. Both of these names require to be considered. Jacob said, 'God, in whose presence my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God which fed me (shepherded me) all my life long until this day, the Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads' (Gen. xlviii. 15, 16). This is evidently indicating the same Divine care as that of which Isaiah speaks: 'In all their adversity He was their adversary, and the Angel of His Presence saved them: in His love and in His pity He redeemed them' (Is. lxiii. 9).

The Angel of the Lord is He who blesses, He who saves, He who redeems. The Angel which redeemed the Angel of the Divine Presence, is one with the God in whose presence Abraham and Isaac walked.

It is remarkable that the Angel of the Lord is first of all mentioned in connection with Hagar. Thus it seems to be intended to show that God has an older covenant of love to man than the covenant

¹ See note A, at end of Meditation.

which He made with Abraham. The covenant with Abraham was a development of the older covenant of creative love. God's love does not begin with Abraham, although through Abraham it becomes as it were formulated in a personal covenant, so that through Abraham it may again shine out the more brightly in its worldwide lustre.

This Angel is an object of holy fear. 'Behold I send an Angel before thee to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared.' So God spake to the children of Israel, anticipating the words of Christ, 'I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go away I will come again and receive you unto Myself, that where I am there ye may be also' (John xiv. 3). The promise was given with a warning. 'Beware of Him (keep thyself before His Presence) and obey His voice' (Ex. xxiii. 21). St. John, writing to Christians of the Divine presence, says in like manner, 'He that is begotten of God keepeth himself' (1 John v. 18).

That Divine Presence must assert itself with special vengeance if He be not honoured. Dishonour to Him is the same as dishonour to the Father who sent Him. That was proclaimed concerning the Angel then which our Lord afterwards said of Himself. 'The Father hath committed all judgment unto the Son, that all men should honour the Son even as they honour the Father' (John v. 22, 23). So God speaks of the Angel of His Presence. 'Provoke Him not, for He will not pardon your transgressions, for My Name is in Him. But if thou wilt obey His voice, and do all that I speak, then I will

be an enemy to thine enemies and an adversary to thine adversaries. For Mine Angel shall go before thee and bring thee in unto the ' six nations, ' and I will cut them off ' (Ex. xxiii. 21-23).

The Angel thus promised to Israel is the same who had spoken to Abraham. He promised Abraham a son (Gen. xviii. 10, 22). He remained speaking with Abraham when the other two angels went on to Sodom. He seems to have appeared afterwards at Sodom, rejoining the two angels whom He sent before Him, who were inferior messengers, created angels, whereas this great Angel was none other than the LORD himself. 'The LORD rained upon Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven' (Gen. xix. 24). He it is who afterwards held Abraham back from slaying his son. 'The Angel of the LORD called unto him out of heaven' (Gen. xxii. 11). In all these transactions He speaks as God and claims the Divine honour, as He says, 'Now I know thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from Me' (Gen. xxii. 12).

O Jesu, teach me always to reverence Thy Presence. As I have been baptised into Thy Name, grant that I may ever seek to do that which is pleasing in Thy sight.

My son, be sure that My Presence shall be in every danger thine all-sufficient protection, but if thou turn My Presence against thee, there is no power that can shield thee from Mine indignation.

O Jesu, it is wonderful that Thou hast borne with me so long. Alas that I should so frequently have outraged Thine Almighty power and scorned Thy love.

O My son, I plead for thee, even I who am thy Judge. In the form of an Angel I appeared of old to Moses, and he pleaded with Me for Israel, but now I have taken upon Myself the seed of Abraham, that I may be a merciful high priest, making reconciliation for thee. Now does My own manhood plead for thee as for one of My own brethren, yea, as one of the members of Mine own body.

O Jesu, when I think of the dignity of Thy mediation, I learn indeed the evil of my sin, which could not be put away without so great an offering.

Trust in Me, My son, but while thou trustest thou must also fear. Great are the gifts of the covenant wherein I am come to mediate on thy behalf, but equally great are its requirements. There was danger to the children of Israel by reason of My Presence, but much more to thee because that Presence is nearer to thee. It is thy life, if thou wilt live thereby; thy death, if thou heed it not.

O Lord, Thy Name was in the Angel form, and Thou hast called me to bear Thy Name as a priest. How can I praise Thee for Thy goodness! How can I rise to the greatness of Thy demand!

My son, thou must at all times look to Me, rest in Me, obey Me, follow Me. Be dead to every other thought save that of serving Me.

O my Jesu, Thy service is my only joy. Write Thou upon me Thy new Name, that I may have my part in the book of life and in the holy city, when Thou comest in Thy kingdom to be glorified of all.

2. HIS PERSONAL SUPREMACY.

The Angel of the Covenant, bearing the Name of God, acts with a personal authority. His Name, His nature, is 'secret' (Jud. xiii. 18). His actions are the manifestation of God. He speaks and acts not with a delegated authority, but with the consubstantial glory of the eternal Trinity. His nature might be hidden, but His voice was with power. His Presence is the warrant of security, not by mediatorial virtue but by inherent majesty. No one that receives a commission from Him may doubt. It is enough that He has said, 'Certainly I will be with thee' (Ex. iii. 12). He does not empty Himself of His glory while exercising this ministration. It is a ministration equal in power to that of our Lord, when being risen from the dead, He said, 'All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore and make disciples of all nations, and lo, I am with you alway' (St. Matt. xxviii. 19, 20).

Thus in the flame of fire in the bush, He commissioned Moses. Thus He called Gideon to that great effort of national deliverance which was chosen as the type of the victory of His own Incarnate Majesty (Jud. viii. 20; Ps. lxxxiii. 11; Is. ix. 4). Thus He promises the birth of a son in words which anticipate the prophet's announcement of His own

birth in a future age (Jud. xiii. 7; Is. vii. 14); and when Manoah and his wife offered their sacrifice, He ascended to heaven in the flame thereof (Jud. xiii. 22). They would have offered Him bread, as Mary would have held Jesus on the resurrection morning, but as then He suffered her not to touch Him, so now He would not eat of the offering of the Danite as a human guest. The offering must be made to God in heaven, and He would accept it by ascending therewith.

When the children of Israel had sinned in the matter of the golden calf, they broke their covenant with God, and consequently Moses broke the tables of the law which were the symbol of the covenant, and the personal guidance of this Angel was withdrawn. An inferior angel, a created angel, was to take the place of this Divine Messenger of the Covenant. The Divine Presence was still promised, but the personal headship which the Angel of the Covenant would have exercised was withdrawn. Still God made Himself manifest in the cloudy pillar at the tent where Moses went to meet with Him outside the camp, but Moses felt himself bereft of that personal Guide to whom he had looked. 'Thou hast not let me know whom Thou wilt send with me' (Ex. xxxiii. 12). Henceforth the law sank down to its creature level, although moved by a Divine Presence of mystery. Christ was the Angel who brought the people of Israel out of Egypt, but as they have sinned against Him, He cannot any longer be their companion. The law is the schoolmaster to bring them to Christ. It has 'a worldly sanctuary' in its midst,

but the true tent of meeting with God is outside the camp.¹ The personal Presence of God would consume them in the way. They need a yet greater deliverance than that from Egypt. They need to have Christ Himself as the living way. It is not enough that He should be with them, unless they are also in Him. Moses prayed, 'Show me Thy way' (Ex. xxxiii. 13). But that way was to be shown to Him afar off, even as the land which he saw from the top of Pisgah. God promised, 'I will give thee rest' (Ex. xxxiii. 14), but neither Moses nor Joshua could bring the people of God into that rest whereof He spake. 'There remaineth a rest for the people of God' (Heb. iv. 9). Moses would see the glory of God pass before him, while he himself remained behind, hidden in the clift of the rock (Ex. xxxiii. 22).

So when Joshua was by Jericho there was no longer the covenanted Presence of the Angel to guide them to victory. Joshua himself knew not whether the mighty form which appeared to him was on the side of Israel or against them (Josh. v. 13). It was the Prince of the Lord's host who came, of whom One like the appearance of a man spake afterwards to Daniel, as Michael the Prince of Israel (Dan. x. 21).

God condescended to speak with Moses as a man with his fellow (Ex. xxxiii. 11), but Moses could not rise up to the fellowship of God. The law had not the fellowship of the Spirit. It was needful to wait for 'the man' that should be 'God's Fellow, the Shepherd of Israel' (Zech. xiii. 7). Moses spake with God face to face, but Moses could not admit the

¹ See note B, at end of Meditation.

people to the like approach. To himself the glory was but external, abiding for a while upon his face and then dying away. They who saw his brightness could not share it, nor gain life thereby. They who approach God in true fellowship must themselves live continually in the presence of the Divine glory. It cannot be permitted to any to share therein by transitory converse, for the Lord is the eternal, the life-giving, the transforming Spirit. This manifestation was to be given afterwards in Christ. 'We all,' as members of Christ, regenerated by the Holy Ghost, 'with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are now changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord' (2 Cor. iii. 18).

O Jesu, Whom the Father hath given to be Head over all things to Thy Church, that we may live with Thy life, help me always to abide in Thee.

Surely I will be with My Church evermore, even unto the end of the world. My promise is sure. O that My people would hearken to My voice, and be true to Me as I am to them!

Teach me, Lord, how I may follow Thee. Show me Thy way, and I will walk in Thy paths.

Thou canst not know My way, My son, so as to walk therein, save by the power of the Holy Spirit binding thee to Me in the fellowship of eternal life. This is that new and living way which I have provided, made sure to thee that thou mayest not err therein. What My prophets have foretold, I have accomplished.

O Blessed Jesu, I look to Thee. As Thou didst stand by Thine Apostle and strengthen him, even so vouchsafe to stand by me in my time of need. Yea, not only do Thou deliver me from the power of man, but tread Thou Satan down under my feet. O Lord and ruler of the house of Israel, who gavest the law in Sinai, give me grace that I may fulfil the righteousness of Thy law and partake of the glory of Thine eternal redemption.

8. HIS FINAL GLORY.

The Angel of God's Presence who dwelt in the midst of the camp and led the children of Israel out of Egypt was driven away by the people's sin. The tent where every one was to go and seek the Lord was removed outside the camp instead of forming its central object. A created angel, probably Michael, who is called the Prince of Israel, took the place of the Uncreated Agent. True, God's presence was still in a certain way accompanying the people, for He still dwelt in the pillar of fire and cloud. He was still leading them to the rest which had been promised.

Now, however, the nation of Israel could no longer simply and naturally develope into the glory of God's firstborn. They had driven Him away, complaining that His mode of Presence did not satisfy, and making to themselves a golden calf. Hereafter, when Messiah came, His presence could not be sought as the living principle of Israelitish worship.

His worshippers would have to go to Him outside of the camp, bearing His reproach (Heb. xiii. 13).

An angel form intervened between Him and the people to whom He would be made manifest. He took not upon Him the nature of angels, but He who makes His angels spirits and His ministers a flaming fire, made His presence to be enshrined within an angelic vehicle instead of dwelling in uncreated activity of personal fellowship in the midst of the people. He was not incarnate in that Angel. His presence would be inalienable from man, when He should take upon Himself the seed of Abraham and establish His Name in the apostolic ministries of His Church.

Nevertheless the office of the Angel did not cease because its exercise was broken by the people's sin. He was still the Angel of a covenant ordered in all things and sure. It was in mercy that He retired from fuller manifestation. He would appear again to accomplish the work of redemption which by leading the people out of Egypt He had now begun.

This Angel of the Lord seems to meet us in 'the man riding upon a red horse, and standing among the myrtle trees' (Zech. i. 9). To Him the angels report what they find in the earth, as the two angels who were sent before Him to Sodom. He pleads for 'the cities of Judah upon whom God has had indignation these seventy years' (i. 12). Joshua the high priest was brought before Him as judge, and Satan stood by as accuser. He promises to raise Joshua and his companions to the dignity of a heavenly priesthood if they are faithful, 'giving him

places to walk among them that stand by,' *i.e.* the ministering angels (Zech. iii. 7).

So does the Angel of the Lord watch over the covenant people, full of love, but nevertheless exercising strict judgment in accordance with the Name of the Lord as it was proclaimed to Moses, 'He keepeth mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin, but will by no means spare the guilty' (Ex. xxxiv. 7). Zechariah speaks of Him as being not inferior to God, but a manifestation of God, communicating Divine life in the latter days to David's house, for 'the house of David shall be as God, as the Angel of the Lord before them' (xii. 8).

Such an Angel might well be an object of fear to pious souls, even as David feared to bring the ark of God into his house. There was indeed a solemn threat of punishment and judgment mingling with His future manifestation. 'In the day when I visit, I will visit their sin upon them' (Ex. xxxii. 34). The lingering penalty must burst out at last upon the impenitent when the days of probation were ended and the full manifestation of love shone out. Thus our Lord weeps because 'Jerusalem did not know the time of her visitation' (Luke xix. 44). He was the Angel of the Divine Covenant whose presence in the midst of them was a judgment discerning between the good and evil.

Of the danger which mingled with His return Malachi gave warning. The people who looked for the promised benefits forgot the great and dreadful Name of the Lord which the Angel bore. 'The Lord Whom ye seek shall suddenly come to His temple,

even the Messenger (Angel) of the Covenant, whom ye delight in : behold He shall come, saith the Lord of hosts. But who may abide the day of His coming, and who shall stand when He appeareth ? for He is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' sope ' (Mal. iii. 1, 2). So will He be manifested in the day when He purifies the sons of Levi, raising the ministrations of the temple to a heavenly dignity as told to Zechariah, and establishing the new dispensation of everlasting glory in fulfilment of the ancient promises, and remembering His holy covenant.

O Jesu, Thou great Angel of the Covenant, who dost make known to us the glory of the Father, bringing us into the heavenly sanctuary with the virtue of Thine own most precious blood shed for our sins and communicated to us as the principle of resurrection-life, grant that I may indeed always bear in mind the solemnity of the calling which Thou hast given me, even to minister in subordination to Thyself amongst the heavenly places. O Lord, I am unequal to so great a burden. O Lord, uphold me with Thy heavenly power.

My son, I will not fail thee. As I have provided the offering which thou must bring, surely I will purify thee that thou mayest offer it in righteousness.

O Jesu, I doubt not Thy love, but I must bewail my manifold transgressions. Alas, Thy prophet asked, ' Who can stand ? ' and I must fall down before Thee and acknowledge myself to be utterly unworthy. O Lord, there is nothing more that Thou canst do for

me. This only do I ask; work Thou within me according to the fulness of Thy grace, that I may not perish by that which Thou doest for me, but may even now find in Thee my shelter, my strength, my life.

NOTE A to p. 212.

It is noticeable that the appearance of the Angel to Hagar brings forward the relation of Israel to God in a twofold manner, morally as being one of the nations of the world, typically as being the people of bondage in contrast with the filial covenant of the Christian Church.

God is the God of all the nations of the earth by nature. All, whether bond or free, look to Him. His covenanted relation to Israel is a subsequent relation into which He was pleased to enter, for the purpose of man's redemption. The Angel does not refuse to wait upon the slave. All are alike to Him.

But Hagar in type represents Israel after the flesh, as Isaac supernaturally born typifies the spiritual kingdom of the Christian Church. As then the Angel waited upon Hagar, so the Angel of the Covenant was the giver of the ancient law. He met Israel in the wilderness of the nations, and by typical institutions pointed perishing man to the true well Lahai-roi, the life-giving vision of the grace of Christ. Beer-lahai-roi = numerically $462 = 42 \times 11 = 77 \times 6$. Forty-two and seventy-seven are the numbers of the covenanted and the natural expectation of Christ from Abraham to Christ and from Adam to Christ respectively. Eleven and six are the numbers of sin which the old covenant did not remove, and of natural power which is insufficient without grace.

NOTE B to p. 218.

Probably we may take the removal of 'the tent of revelation' or 'of meeting with God' in connection with the withdrawal of the Uncreated Angel of the Covenant who was to have gone up in the midst of the camp of Israel. In consequence of their sin God would no longer go up in the same

closeness of communion as before. The tabernacle which should have enshrined the Divine glory so as to be the life of Israel was reduced to the level of a 'worldly sanctuary' (Heb. ix. 11), and although there was a manifestation of God's Presence therein, nevertheless there was the interposition of a created Angel, bearing God's Name, between the national sanctuary and Himself, and still it was necessary for 'every one which sought the Lord' individually to 'go out into the tabernacle of the congregation [the tent of meeting or revelation] which was without the camp' (Ex. xxxiii. 7). There it was that God spake with Moses. There Joshua abode, the great type of the coming Saviour's humanity, as the Angelic Presence was the earnest of His Divine personal guidance. 'Joshua never departed out of the tent of meeting' (xxxiii. 11). It was, so to speak, the home of Christ, the Angel of the Covenant, who would in due time, but not until after many vicissitudes, come back to His temple. That temple would not be the tabernacle then erected, but the living tabernacle of Abraham's Seed.

Thus from the very beginning the law was guardian to bring men to Christ. It had not the very image (Heb. x. 1). Christ had for a season retired from the sanctuary of Israel. The brightness of Christ rested upon the face of Moses, but when he had spoken to the people he veiled his face, for his words had reference to that which still was hidden. Christ is the end of the law, and the Israelites after their sin could not look steadfastly upon Christ (2 Cor. iii. 13).

The veil was a symbol of the sin which shrouded the hearts of the people. When Moses turned unto the Lord, the veil was taken away. The Lord to whom he turned was the Angel of the Covenant, the giver of the Holy Ghost. Such access to God is the free access of children, as distinguished from the servile approach which alone was possible in the tabernacle: and we who draw near to Christ by the ministration of the Spirit must be transformed, not as Moses was by an evanescent intermittent glory, but by an ever-growing glory, the living imperishable 'Light of the glorious gospel of Christ, Who is the image of God' (2 Cor. iv. 4).

MEDITATION XXI.

The Redeemer.

Beginning from Moses and from all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.—St. Luke xxiv. 27.

1. HIS HUMAN KINSHIP.

WE read of redemption first of all in connection with the Angel of the Lord. Jacob calls Him, 'the Angel which redeemed me from all evil' (Gen. xlviii. 16). We must look to the subsequent history to gather the meaning of these words, as it is impossible for us to refer to any special feature of the patriarch's life by which such an expression was occasioned.

God speaks of Himself many times as the Redeemer of Israel, but if we would gain a clear idea of what that title means we shall find it by consideration of the laws having reference to redemption which are given us in the Pentateuch, and that beautiful Pastoral in which our redemption is historically prefigured, the Book of Ruth.¹

According to the Mosaic law, the redeemer, the Goel, was to be the nearest kinsman of the man for whom relief was sought. He had the right to redeem the land or person of his poor brother, when by reason of debt he had fallen under the power of a creditor. In case of his death by violence it was

¹ See note at end of Meditation.

his duty to avenge him upon the murderer, and if he died without children it was his duty to take the widow and raise up seed, so that the name of the deceased might not perish in Israel.

The title of Redeemer is one that God often appropriates, and in so doing He claims to be our Kinsman. That is to say, the name is used in prospect of the Incarnation. God is not merely a mighty Being capable of vindicating us by His sovereign power, but He acts as a man on behalf of men, and the law which He gave to Moses was an anticipation of those laws of conduct by which His actions on our behalf should be ruled.

The return of all lands, to be distributed after fifty years according to the original distribution in families, was a continual assertion of the rights of God as the Divine Landlord. To Him as God all belonged, and after the year of jubilee all returned into His hands, that He might distribute it among the claimants. The land redeemed is that which is for a while under the power of our great enemy Satan, but even over this God exercises rights as man's Kinsman. Satan cannot act towards man without acknowledging God's sovereignty, for man, created in God's image, has not lost the relationship to that Divine predestination in virtue whereof God is not ashamed to call us brethren.

When Jacob speaks of God the good Shepherd, the Angel which redeemed him, he alludes to the predestined Incarnation which made God akin to him, as David for the same reason speaks of the coming Saviour by that appropriative title, 'My

by the Incarnation. It was by the A
i.e. by the manifestation of God in
God's people were redeemed (Ps. lx
is the Arm of the Lord whereby th
Lord will cause the standard to be
the enemy, the royal banner of the h
the Redeemer shall come in the flesh
ance of Zion (Is. lix. 19, 20). He w
one of our kin, becomes indeed the F
to those who live through Him. God
called Our Father in the Old Testa
by His manifestation as the Sheph
that penitent Israel are instructed to
'Thou, O Lord, art our Father, our
Name is from everlasting' (Is. lxiii.

*O Jesu, how wonderful is Thy lo
hast taken upon Thyself our infirmit
reject us even by reason of our sins.*

**My son, it was in love that I
of the dust, and that which I ha
unto the end, for I change not.**

No price is too great for love to give. I give for thee Myself.

Blessed be Thy Name, most loving Jesu. Teach me to live in the power of Thy love, that I may be worthy of it by the participation of Thy life.

O My son, I love not that which is unworthy, and therefore My love must gather thee into close fellowship with Myself if I do not reject thee altogether.

Truly Thou hast loved me with an everlasting love, therefore in mercy hast Thou drawn me. Thou hast loved me because Thou hast created me in Thine own image, and because Thou lovedst me Thou hast become my kinsman. O fill me, Blessed Jesu, with Thy love for ever.

2. HIS AVENGING STRIFE.

The Goel had for a duty to avenge the death of his kinsman. The Son of God, as the Kinsman of the human race, Firstborn among His brethren by the primogeniture of eternal strength, must avenge the fall of man upon Satan and the powers of evil.

Kinsman's vengeance was regulated by certain restrictions under the Mosaic law. There were six cities of refuge, three on either side of Jordan, cities of the priests. These three cities seem to represent the refuge of the Divine Name, powerful through the mediation of Christ, on either side of Jordan, that is, in the Mosaic and the baptismal covenants. Thither the manslayer might flee, and he was safe from the avenger until he had been judged by the congrega-

tion. He who was pronounced guilty of murder was given up to the wrath of the Goel: but the involuntary homicide had to remain in confinement within the limits of the city until the high priest's death. Then, and not until then, he became free.

The redemption of Christ does not shelter the evil from the due reward of their deeds. 'They are of their father the devil, for he was a murderer from the beginning' (John viii. 44). Murder is the all-inclusive type of sin, for by sin we slay our own souls and our brethren's also. 'Cain was of the wicked one, and slew his brother' (1 John iii. 12). To punish sin is to avenge a murder. Sins, however, of infirmity have their place of refuge. 'The name of the Lord is a strong tower. The righteous runneth into it and is high out of reach' (Prov. xviii. 10). There the manslayer must remain until the death of the High Priest. Nothing short of the death of Christ can clothe even the penitent with eternal security. Those who have sought pardon for their sins in the Divine Name abide in the righteousness of faith.

The Goel is the type of Messiah as the Seed of the woman, the Avenger. Nevertheless the seed of the serpent must come for judgment in presence of the congregation of the righteous ere they can receive their doom. There is a resurrection of the just and of the unjust. The High Priest's life is a perpetual intercession which shields them until the judgment. God has committed all judgment unto the Son. At His coming with His saints He shall take vengeance on them that obey not the gospel (2 Thess. i. 8).

The Goel is no less upon the watch for the punishment of those who leave the city, *i.e.* those who break away from the covenant. Judgment must begin at the house of God, and the righteous shall scarcely be saved (1 Pet. iv. 17, 18).

The Redeemer, however, has a double work. He has to redeem His people from all iniquity, and He must bring them into security. The work of redemption culminates in mysterious forgiveness. He who is the Avenger is no less the Atoner. When the High Priest died, the power of the Avenger ceased. That High Priest was Messiah Himself, no less than the Goel was, nor would the Goel be a type of Messiah without this ministry of reconciliation.

Thus then the Mosaic law shows us that Christ does not merely redeem from iniquity as an external foe, but as an inherent principle. He redeems us from our self-murdering selves, and He does so, not by violence but by death. The death of the High Priest points to the death of the Redeemer as the act by which the redemption is made complete. Christ must suffer ere He can have the glory of giving pardon. The avenger has no power over those who have been delivered from original sin by the shelter of Messiah's death, whether (as the cities on one side Jordan signified) in the Jewish dispensation waiting for Christ to come, or (as the cities on the other side Jordan signified) buried with Christ by baptism into death, so as to have their part in the city of God.

O Jesu, blessed be Thy Name that Thou hast destroyed the bondage of Satan, humbling Thyself to die.

My son, I have called thee into the holy city. Take care that thou lose not thy part therein.

Jesu, Thou art my refuge. In Thy grave I am safe. In Thy resurrection I find my only life. O let me never leave Thee. Hold me; hide me. Thy death is the warrant of my security. Let me be dead along with Thee, that with Thee I may live for ever.

8. HIS ACQUIRED RIGHTS.

The Goel had a right to acquire the property of his kinsman, alienated by debt. Jesus purchases the Church for Himself as a peculiar possession.

We are indeed His slaves, for He has redeemed us from the slavery of Satan. The Hebrew, however, who acquired a right of ownership in the person of one of his brethren was bound to treat him as an hired servant, giving him full wages for his work. So did he foreshadow Christ. We have no right of our own, as we belong to Him, and yet He rewards us for our obedience as if the obedience were voluntary.

He has acquired all that we had lost. 'All power is given unto Me in heaven and earth,' says the risen Saviour (St. Matt. xxviii. 18). 'The whole creation groaneth. We wait for the adoption, to wit the redemption of our body' (Rom. viii. 23). 'The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof' (Ps. xxiv. 1). Yet He calls us to enjoy all things along with Him. He refuses not to associate Himself with the barren widow, as belonging to the property which

He acquires. This aspect of our redemption is set forth in the Book of Ruth. The Son of God espouses humanity unto Himself, that so He may raise up the name of the first Adam who else had indeed perished. He has abolished in His flesh the enmity, the law of commandments contained in ordinances (Eph. ii. 18), that He might nourish and cherish us as His own body (v. 29), that we may bring forth fruit unto holiness, and have the end, everlasting life (Rom. vi. 22).

Such is the dignity of our calling in Christ, but this could not be unless He had paid the adequate price. The multitude in heaven praise Him, for 'He hath redeemed us unto God by His blood out of every kindred and tongue and people and nation' (Rev. v. 9). The price which Messiah should pay was indicated by the glory of the rights which He should acquire as the Bridegroom of new Creation. If He would acquire for Himself as the Spouse of the Church the glory of man's original predestination, there was no price that He could pay short of the full acceptance of man's outcast condition, 'humbling Himself to death' (Phil. ii. 8).

O Jesu, I am Thine, wholly Thine, yea Thine for ever. Thou hast purchased me with Thy blood, that I may evermore live with Thy life.

Yea, My son, thou art dear to Me as My own self. The world around thee was created out of nothing. Thou art created anew out of My very self, bone of My Bone, and flesh of My Flesh. From Myself I formed thee. With My-

self I feed thee. He that dwelleth in Me hath everlasting life.

O Lord Jesu, ineffable is Thy goodness. I am Thine, therefore I am safe. It were much if I could only say Thou art mine, but that which is mine perishes with myself. The joy of the moment perishes with the moment. O my Saviour, I am Thine, and that which is Thine cannot perish, for Thou art eternal. Yea, it lives for evermore in Thee. O sweetest of possessions ! O most sure and imperishable refuge ! My beloved is mine, and I am His ! What can I more say ? I hear the voice of my Beloved, saying 'I have ransomed thee from the power of the grave ; I have redeemed thee from death ; O death, I am thy plagues ; O grave, I will be thy destruction ; repentance shall be hid from Mine eye.' O most loving triumph of my most mighty Redeemer ! My Beloved has spoken, and he saith unto me, ' Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away.'

NOTE to p. 226.

The history of Ruth stands out so remarkably as a type of our redemption, that it will not be amiss to notice its symbolism with some detail. It seems to be as follows.

Elimelech (God is king) represents the human race, and Naomi (pleasantness) is the Divine predestination attaching to man by God's decree. Elimelech died, leaving two sons, Mahlon (sickly) and Chilion (consumption), the Jew and the Gentile. In the time of famine Naomi removes after her husband's death into the land of Moab, amidst the family of Lot, which signifies the religion of nature as contrasted with the family of Abraham and the covenant of faith. Mahlon is married to Ruth the Moabitess, the type of the elect,

Chilion to Orpah, who symbolises all else. The word Ruth means friend, and expresses the fellowship of the Divine covenant. It is the same word which is used by God of 'the man which is my fellow' (Zech. xiii. 7). It implies the fellowship of the Holy Ghost.

Naomi tells her daughters-in-law that she cannot hope to have sons who shall be as husbands unto them. That is to say, the Divine predestination can never revive by any upspringing of natural piety within the fallen race of man.

She returns a widow to Judah, and bids people call her Mara, for the pleasantness of the Divine predestination has been changed into the bitter experience of man's fallen condition.

However, the Divine predestination accompanies the faithful as they return to the covenant of God and the revelation of the Incarnate Saviour. So Naomi and Ruth come together to Bethlehem. The time was the beginning of barley harvest, that is, the Passover. It is the resurrection of the soul in Christ which is the reappearance of the Divine predestination within the land of promise.

Naomi's husband had an acquaintance named Boaz, which means strength. He is the Redeemer, strong to save, known by previous revelation, and also of the family of Elimelech, for the Redeemer was to take upon himself man's nature.

Ruth went into the fields to glean ears of corn wherever she might find grace amidst the golden crops of Bethlehem. The elect are drawn by the Spirit of God to seek for that which is left of the bread of heaven upon the fields which God hath blessed, although by nature they have no claim to reap as God's servants. God has gifts of loving providence and preventing grace for the nourishment of those who are not yet admitted to the fellowship of His covenant. She came to a portion of the field belonging to Boaz, that is, to the ordinances of Jewish worship and the teachings of prophecy, the religion of Christ, although He was not yet Incarnate.

The dispensation of pre-Christian faith is the land of

Emmanuel, and the air resounds with the name of the loving Saviour in the master's greeting, 'The Lord be with you.' The reapers answered, 'The Lord bless thee.' Their master is He that is blessed, coming in the name of the Lord.

The servant which was set over the reapers may be taken as the angel guardian of the Jewish nation, or as some leading angel amongst the servants of the Most High, who reap the harvests of His love and leave gifts scattered even to nourish souls in a fallen but expectant world.

The maidens who are gleaning are the various souls whom Christ is drawing to Himself, as in the 45th Psalm, 'the virgins that be her fellows' (lit. her Ruths).

Ruth gleaned from morning, that is from the first beginning of the time when Divine truth shone upon her soul. Souls which are prepared for the gift of perseverance lose no time. As the noon drew near, when Boaz came into the field, she was tarrying a little in the house. The house is the Temple worship, in which the servants of God were waiting hopefully for the Redeemer, the Messenger of the Covenant, to come and greet them, as the Divine promise drew towards its noonday.

Boaz praises Ruth for her conduct towards her mother. Christ welcomes the elect because they are attentive to the guidance of predestinating love.

She prays to him for grace, because he has comforted her. So does the soul seek to know the grace of Christ in all its abounding fulness which has been touched by the Holy Ghost the Comforter. She is called to join with the reapers in the bread and vinegar which is prepared. The vinegar is the sour wine, the unripe grape, of the old covenant.

She is to go and glean among the sheaves, that is, in the plenty of Christian grace prepared for the true Bethlehemites who feed upon the bread of heaven. It is yet standing in the field, but some handfuls of grain are to be let fall for her, the rich promises of the prophets whereon elect souls delight to feed.

The time came for Boaz to winnow barley in the threshing floor. The floor is the Jewish covenant, of which John

Baptist says, 'He will thoroughly purge His floor.' The end of barley harvest and of wheat harvest seems to be the end of the world, the end of the Jewish and Christian dispensations.

'Wash thyself, anoint thee, put thy raiment on.' So speaks Naomi to Ruth. It is the washing of regeneration, the anointing of the Holy Ghost, the raiment of the righteousness of Christ.

She is to mark the place where Boaz shall lie down. The faithful soul comes to the humiliation of Jesus. Boaz lying down represents our Lord laying aside His glory and humbling Himself to die. 'I lay me down and slept: I rose up again.'

He lay at the end of the high heap of winnowed corn, for all the graces of the Christian harvest whereby souls are made meet for the garner of the Lord are summed up in Him.

Ruth uncovered his feet and lay down softly. The feet express the life of Christ as He walks upon the earth. So does the elect soul lie at the feet of Jesus, which seeks to be covered with the grace of His earthly life and Passion.

Midnight is the death of Christ. The man was afraid and turned himself. Jesus felt the horror and burden of our sin and descended into hell. In the grave He knows the souls which look to Him for grace, all souls even to the end of the world, as many as do so. The death of Christ was before the end of wheat harvest in time, but in the reckoning of eternity it is present to the end of the world, for He by His prescience foreknew the need, and the faithful of every age look back to Calvary for present help in trouble.

Then Ruth claimed from Boaz the kindness of a near kinsman, a redeemer. This does the elect soul claim from Jesus.

But Boaz said there was a kinsman nearer than himself to whom the right belonged. That is the Jewish priesthood. They are near of kin to the soul, but the law was weak through the flesh. The law cannot redeem. The incompetence of the law must be confessed before Jesus intervenes to redeem.

Ruth lies down until the morning. Not until the resurrection does Christ make manifest the fulness of His redemption to the souls which trust in Him.

‘Bring the veil that thou hast upon thee.’ The veil is our human nature. ‘He measured six measures of barley.’ Barley is the symbol of Jewish gifts, and six measures imply earthly fulness as contrasted with the sevenfold gifts and the wheaten grain of the Christian dispensation.

In the morning Boaz went to the gate. This is our Lord in the resurrection. The kinsman who had first right to redeem passed by. All mankind pass by in that day.

‘He took ten men of the elders of the city.’ These were to be witnesses of the transaction between the two kinsmen. These ten men are the Ten Commandments by which all mankind are to be judged. They were a test which the old law could not stand. The old law would be willing to take the inheritance, but the inheritance was to be bought of the hand of Ruth, and the law could not take to itself the souls of fallen humanity so as to raise up amongst them a godly seed. It had therefore to abandon its right to be known as the redeemer of mankind.

‘The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and of death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit’ (Rom. viii. 3, 4).

In the resurrection Christ will claim as His own for ever the souls which have been made fruitful by Him in the anticipatory resurrection of regenerating grace. Now He has taken away the handwriting which was against us in the covenant of the law, but the fulness of our union with Him will not be until the adoption, the redemption of our body.

The man plucked off his shoe. In the light of that day the covenant of the law takes off its shoe, for it can no longer go forth to walk in the ways of earth. The eternal Redeemer *is left alone* to be exalted, alone to be beloved.

Thus at length shall the soul which was far off from God be restored to glory, and the name of the dead shall be raised up. The heir of the Divine predestination shall be made manifest, being restored with promises of greater glory by the grace of Him that is mighty to save.

The child which is born of this union is called Obed, that is to say the servant of the Lord. As Christ is the Servant of the Lord, so each soul regenerated in Him, each of His members, must be the servant of the Lord also.

The mystery of redemption begins to be made manifest by the grace of the first resurrection, but waits for its completeness unto the end, when those who are sealed with the Holy Ghost until the day of redemption shall have their perfect manifestation in glory with Jesus. This makes it impossible for the natural narrative to carry out the full teaching in simple parallelism. The end of wheat harvest carries us onward to the end of the world as the time of judgment. The resurrection of grace consequent upon the overthrow of Judaism is the beginning of the espousal whereby Jesus the Redeemer takes souls one by one unto Himself. Now are the souls of the elect brought to Him to be His. At the end shall be the great wedding supper of the Lamb, when the city of the redeemed comes forth from God as a bride adorned to meet her husband.

MEDITATION XXII.

The Arm of the Lord.

Beginning from Moses and from all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.—St. Luke xxiv. 27.

1. THE DIVINE AGENCY.

THE work of redemption was a Divine work. Although wrought in the form of man, it needed the strength of God. It is therefore constantly attributed to God's 'outstretched arm.' The expression occurs thirteen times, 'I will redeem you with a stretched-out arm and with great judgments' (Ex. vi. 6). Generally we have the double phrase, 'a mighty hand and a stretched-out arm' (Deut. iv. 34).

This must not be taken as a mere anthropomorphic metaphor. It implies a different action from that of the Creator, 'He spake and it was done: He commanded and it stood fast' (Ps. xxxiii. 9). It implies a manifest instrument, an incarnation. God speaks and works by His Word in acts which are purely beneficent, but the work of redemption is a work of struggle. In it God for some purpose of mystery condescends to recognise the power of evil.

All God's works as they emanate from Himself are utterances of pure goodness and love. The

Divine will utters itself by the Divine Word. There is no effort.

Struggle with evil, however triumphant, every form of the work of vengeance, is God's strange work. It therefore demands the intervention of some created instrumentality.

The existence of evil, which all must recognise, and the Divine Incarnation which is the object of our faith, are two mysteries which seem to involve one another. The very toleration of evil within the realm of omnipotent goodness implies the action of God under some limitations such as Incarnation brings with it, whereas God in His own Divine supremacy can know no limitations. The final judgment of evil implies a created instrument through which God may assert the claims of moral right. The principle extends beyond the range of humanity, although our Lord asserts it with reference to the judgment as passed upon the human race. 'The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son. As the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself'—the Divine Nature is one and the same. 'But He hath given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man' (John v. 22, 26, 27). This judicial authority is His by reason of His possessing a life in common with those on whom He is to pass the sentence.

So likewise the intermediate processes by which God helps His faithful people are inconsistent with an action purely Divine. Any intervention of God

which was purely Divine would overthrow the moral balance of the world. God cannot give imperfect help. God cannot act in any way that is illusory. In every moment that He acts He must display His infinite power. He cannot rebuke the enemies of His people and fail in their deliverance. It may therefore be seen to be a necessity in such a condition of things as the world exhibits round about us, that there should be some treasury of Divine grace from which man may draw according to his faith. The supply as given by God must be sufficient: if man fails to obtain sufficient help to become victorious, it is because he does not call into operation all the resources which Divine omnipotence puts at the disposal of faith. Such Divine gifts cannot be obtained from the Divine Nature in its own indivisible glory. Those gifts must be offered to man under the limitations which the Incarnation makes possible. The moral discipline of man, with all its phenomena of Divine protection, assistance, redemption; the interference of God in His anger, whether to punish or to avenge; the interposition of God to perfect His creation from within itself, and not by the action of irresistible power from without,—all these necessitate the assumption of a created nature through which the Divine powers may be so exerted as not to overwhelm that which He would invigorate.

The *difficulty* of the Incarnation is identical with the difficulty of Creation, namely, the co-existence of the finite and the Infinite. This we cannot solve. It is a difficulty of nature which religion does not profess to explain, because we could not understand

any explanation. That which involves the Infinite transcends our mental grasp.

The *moral necessity* of the Incarnation in order to develope in perfection that order of nature under which we find ourselves to be created is a matter on which we can form some conception. We might not have anticipated so great an act of Divine love if it had not been revealed: but now that it is revealed we can perceive its fitness and its necessity.

O Jesu, blessed art Thou for that Thou dost come in the weakness of the creature to exert the fulness of the power of God.

O My son, look not to the power of the world, but trust in My arm for thy protection. In all thy weakness I will uphold thee. Fear not, for underneath thee are the everlasting arms of the Divine love wherewith I gather all My loved ones into the security of Mine own eternal triumph.

O Thou Arm of the Lord, awake as in the ancient days. Surely Thine arm is not shortened that it cannot save, and yet it seems to me as if I could no longer resist the enemy.

Fear not, My son, Mine arm brings salvation. As I have redeemed thee, so will I strengthen thee, that thou also mayest tread down Satan under thy feet shortly.

O my Jesu, I lean wholly on Thee, my Beloved. Surely Thou hast set me as a seal upon Thine heart, suffering for me in the mystery of redemption. Set me also as a seal upon Thine arm. I have to bear

the buffeting of the enemy, but to Thee alone can I look. So will I sing the new song of deliverance, for Thou art the holy Arm of the Lord by whom we gain the victory.

2. THE DIVINE PURPOSE.

The Arm of the Lord was made bare (Is. lii. 10) by the Incarnation. The Person of the Redeemer comes forth from beneath the vesture of creation. The manifestation of God in the flesh is not the development of a Pantheistic presence, as if God were by nature identified with the material world, and suffered His Presence to be essentially concentrated, as it were, in some consecrated image, according to the conception of Asiatic idolatry. God exists within Himself. The created universe comes between Him and our natural conceptions. The power of His Word underlies all, rules all, but is distinct from all.

By the Incarnation that Word becomes flesh. The eternal Personality is identified with the visible form and substance. 'The Word is made flesh, and dwells amongst us' (John i. 14). We see Him. His glory may be hidden, but he that hath seen Christ hath seen God (John xiv. 9). The prophet's words are accomplished, 'Tell ye the cities of Judah, behold your God' (Is. xl. 9).

God comes in the flesh in order to carry onward to its completeness the work of the original creation. Without the Incarnation, creation must ever remain a work unworthy of God. Without it, God would be working for an end external to Himself and con-

sequently inferior to Himself and unworthy of Himself.

St. Paul tells us, on the contrary, respecting Messiah, 'All things were created by Him and for Him, Who is the image of the invisible God, in Whom we have redemption through His blood' (Col. i. 14, 15, 16).

That Presence which lay hidden in mystery aforetime is bared to view. The watchful power, Divine yet ministerial, which attended upon the fathers in the wilderness, is seen at length in the distinct Personality of the Incarnate Son.

He comes as a Son into His own household (Heb. iii. 6). He comes to take possession of that which is His own (John i. 11). He comes to gather it out of the enemy's hand. The first Adam failed in the purpose of his creation, to subdue the earth (Gen. i. 28). The second Adam comes to do it, and to do it more abundantly. He comes 'to subdue our iniquities' (Mic. vii. 19). 'The judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification' (Rom. v. 16), and it is the Arm of the Lord which hath brought salvation unto Him, and His righteousness it sustained Him' (Is. lix. 16).

He comes not only to avenge but to tend. It is the arm of a shepherd which is made known. 'He gathers the lambs with His arm' (Is. xl. 11). The salvation which He brings is not merely rescue from tyranny but restoration to perfect life and holiness. 'With His own Right Hand and with His holy Arm, He hath gotten Himself the victory' (Ps. xcvi. 1).

Thus He accomplishes the work of perfecting creation by the development of powers within itself of which His Divine glory is the life and spring. Creation could not otherwise reach up to God, nor go beyond the measure of its own necessity. All efforts at development would be balked by the limitation of the original law, 'Hitherto shalt thou go, and no further.' The Word of God communicates an impulse to creation so that it develops itself in response to the external command. So God said Let the earth bring forth; let the waters bring forth. He communicates an impulse for moral and spiritual development by internal communication of His own life-giving Spirit. So 'He takes hold of the seed of Abraham' (Heb. ii. 16). Man's nature becomes in His grasp a weapon of strength. The arm of the Lord bends the bow of Judah, and makes the humanity thus assumed as the sword of a mighty man (Zech. ix. 18). The human nature operates with the communicated power of the Divine. 'Gird Thee with Thy sword upon Thy thigh, O Thou most Mighty, according to Thy worship and renown' (Ps. xlv. 8).

O Jesu, how glorious art Thou. We praise Thee coming upon the earth. O set Thy glory above the heavens. Yea, now that Thou art seated there in Thy glorified humanity, lift us up along with Thyself, that we may behold Thy kingdom in all its majesty.

My son, thou must fulfil My purposes upon the earth if thou wouldst attain to behold My glory in the heavens.

O Jesu, in following Thee I attain to the true end of my being, for Thine image is the true image whereunto I must be conformed. In the knowledge of Thee I learn all the Father's will, and I cannot know Thee save by the gift of Thy Holy Spirit whereby Thou dost strengthen me to follow Thee.

Look to Me, and thou shalt learn more than can be learnt anywhere besides. All things point to Me as their end, that in all of them I may make Myself manifest.

O Jesu, nature is blank without Thee : life is aimless without thee : the wisdom of man is darkness without Thee, and the love of man is unsatisfying without Thee. Thou comest out of the wilderness like pillars of smoke in majesty, colossal and formless to our view, in the incomprehensibility of Godhead, but Thou dost reveal Thyself in tenderness and brightness to those that welcome Thee. Thy head is as the fine gold of heaven, yea, Thou shinest with the glory of God. O carry me far away from this world of evil. Bear me upward to the throne of glory. Surely Thou hast stooped to my lowliness that Thou mayest raise me to Thy heavenly height.

8. THE DIVINE MANNER.

The Arm of the Lord is mighty in its results, but unseen in its operation. None can behold its spiritual reality unless they have the eyes of the understanding opened to contemplate spiritual truth. The natural heart perceives not the things of the Spirit of God. Therefore the prophet speaks as he

does, 'Who hath believed our report, and to whom is the Arm of the Lord revealed?' (Is. liii. 1).

Divine power is not an exaggeration of human power or of any other created power. It is a contradiction of it. Created power is measured by motion. God the Almighty is immovable, 'Himself unmoved, all motion's source.' His pure changeless will originates all changes round about Him. The creatures transmit by motion the force impressed upon them. He, the Creator, communicates without loss to Himself the forces which work throughout them all. Whether they be physical forces operating by necessity, or moral forces operating according to free will, He communicates all. The freedom of the free agent and the necessary action of the mechanical power are equally derived from Him.

God takes part in the actions of His creatures when He admits them into covenant with Himself. Otherwise His action is supreme, external, and compulsory. By covenant He limits Himself and becomes as one of His creatures, subject to external regulations of conduct although possessing infinite resources of interior strength. Such covenanted action would be a mere fiction if God's manifestation amongst the creatures were only phenomenal. Such covenanted action possessed a moral truth and dignity from the beginning, because the Divine covenant was no mere arrangement for a time, but was always pointing onward to the great truth of 'Him that was to come,' the Incarnation of the Only-begotten.

The Arm of the Lord then is an action of Divine

power under covenanted limitations, and consequently subject to human opposition and to apparent discomfiture.

It may be stretched out in the manifestation of Divine triumph, but even then its triumph will be seen to be Divine by the inadequacy of the agent through which it becomes visible. The accumulation of natural powers hides its truth instead of making it more palpable. The Divine action does not really come into manifestation until it is evident that the natural power fails.

The rod of Moses had no natural fitness for working those miracles by which Israel was delivered. God redeemed Israel 'with a mighty hand and stretched-out arm' (Ps. cxxxvi. 12).

But there was another rod whereby the Arm of the Lord should effect yet greater wonders. The Divine power is manifested not only disproportionately to the outward instrument, but in proportion to the natural incapacity of that through which it works. Man's nature must be reduced to the utmost measure of its incapacity, and must be subjected to opposition of the most overwhelming magnitude, if the Arm of God is to be made bare. Thus it was upon the Cross. Jesus describes Himself by the Psalmist as being 'a worm and no man, a very scorn of men and the outcast of the people' (Ps. xxii. 6). Thus it is that He triumphs over the powers of darkness with the outstretched arm of Divine love and human intercession. 'The arms of His hands were made strong by the hand of the mighty God of Jacob' (Gen. xlix. 24). The lifting

up of His hands as He was appealing to God was an evening sacrifice (Ps. cxli. 2). As He was appealing to man He showed Himself to be that Wisdom whose complaint was of old, 'I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded' (Prov. i. 24).

In those outstretched arms the Divine power was manifested, for they accomplished a greater overthrow than any earthly powers could have done. He 'spoiled principalities and powers, and made a show of them openly, triumphing over them by His Cross' (Col. ii. 15). We did not see the struggle. Those who stood on Calvary itself could not see it. They saw the victory, and at the end of eighteen centuries we see it still.

To whom then is the Arm of the Lord revealed? He grew up as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground, so that the nation abhorred Him (Is. liii. 2; xlix. 7), but now the Branch of the Lord has become glorious as 'an ensign unto all the nations,' and those who reject the sovereignty of the Crucified bear witness to the power of that Godhead which they seek to repudiate. There is a mighty fascination in the Cross. 'Never man spake,' nor acted, nor suffered, nor died, 'like this man' (John vii. 46). This death has conquered hell, redeemed mankind, broken open the gates of heaven, made manifest the glory of God.

'Hast thou an arm like God?' (Job xl. 9). We cannot exert a power like His. We gaze upon the Cross. We long to be conformable to His death (Phil. iii. 10). That death strips away from Him all that *is of earth*, and we would fain be stript of all and die

to all, that we may know the power of His life. This is that which Jesus Himself has foretold, 'I, if I be lifted up from the earth, shall draw all men unto Me' (John xii. 32).

O Jesu, Thy strength is made perfect in weakness. Most blessed is that weakness wherein Thy strength is revealed.

Yea, My son, great is the blessing of those who can behold the arm of the Lord and rest thereon, rejecting every arm of flesh and rejoicing in My Divine care.

O my Jesu, so would I rejoice. Therefore have I sought Thee in the vows of Religion, that in poverty I may learn Thy power and in shame Thy glory.

So shall it be well with thee, My son; only be watchful to persevere in this thy choice. Too many when they come into Religion rely upon the world to make up for them those powers which they put out of their own grasp. So must it not be with thee. Thou must rejoice not only to be poor, but to feel thy poverty, assured that I can do for thee far more.

Yea, Lord, pardon me that I am so apt to complain because I have not, and to desire what Thou withholdest. I am sure that whatever Thou takest away is but a fresh occasion of gaining some fresh participation of Thyself.

Look to Me, My son, with this confidence, and the fulness of My supernatural power shall be with thee.

O Lord, people complain that they see no longer

any tokens, for Thou dost not show the power of Thy mighty Arm as in the days of old.

My son, I am ever ready to show My power, but they are ever looking for their power. They cannot see Mine until they are content to lose their own. O, if there were in them an understanding heart, how would I manifest My glory in them!

O Lord Jesu, give me such a heart that I may desire to die to all outward things, so as to live to Thee alone. Put away all earthly things not only from my hand but from my heart. If thou givest me earthly things, let them not be a snare to me. O let me know the emptiness of all things at the outset, that I may find in all things the fulness of Thy grace for the accomplishment of that which no earthly power could ever bring to pass.

MEDITATION XXIII.

The Son of Man.

Beginning from Moses and from all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.—St. Luke xxiv. 27.

1. THE IMAGE OF GOD.

MAN was created in God's image, but man's nature was a lifeless image of the Everliving. God breathed into man's nostrils the breath of life, and he became a living soul. The life, however, was not inherent in him. It was soon lost. From that time onward man was but a dead image. His soul had powers of action for the life of reason, but he had no longer the Spirit, and without that Spirit his soul could not rise up to its proper functions. By the possession of a spiritual nature intended to be the organ of the Divine Spirit dwelling within him, he had a capacity for a life higher than that which his soul could of itself exercise. This capacity involved a necessity. Being formed for this high purpose, man's nature became a horrible thing unless it fulfilled it. The spiritual power which remained as the highest element of man's nature was an object of misery and abomination, even though the soul with which it was conjoined might possess the highest natural powers of excellence for moral and intellectual

achievements. Man had been formed for the inhabitation of God, and as the fairest mould of features can in no way compensate for the absence of life when the breath has departed from the body, so was it impossible for any powers of nature, however noble, to raise any individual amongst mankind out of the consequences of the fall. He walked upon the earth as a corpse, having lost the life of God. The more God loved him, yea, and the more he might at times seem to rise to be worthy of that love, so much the more was he loathsome to the eye of His Creator. As the presence of the corpse of one we love when corruption has begun to creep over the lines where beauty lingers : as the presence of a maniac uttering horrible words with a voice that recalls affectionate remembrances of bygone years : such, but unspeakably more sad, must have been the presence of fallen man to God, now that he had lost, not physical life, nor mental power, but the spiritual capacity of eternal life.

This life could not be restored to man by any external agency. Moral and intellectual development were only subsidiary to the higher energies of the Spirit. Rizpah might drive away the birds from her dead, but she could not thereby restore life. The law as given by Moses might obviate some tendencies of corruption in man, but there was 'no law that could give life,' nor lead man on to 'righteousness' (Gal. iii. 21). No overshadowing of the Shechinah could give the illumination of the Divine Spirit which was necessary in order for man to rise to the fellowship of God.

Consequently it was in vain that the Angel of the Covenant should be the mere Shepherd of Israel by any external guidance however tender and watchful.

- The Servant of the Lord must not bring up to heaven a corpse from the lower world, however fair. He
- must not merely embalm that which He would save. The dead image of God would be ghastly still. Messiah must give life, and since He could not infuse life externally, He must take man's nature upon Himself, that the organs of humanity might live by His personal appropriation, and the Spirit of life proceeding from His Person might fill those organs with the life of God.

Thus should the image of God shine with the likeness of God, and once more be found worthy of the Divine love, as Isaiah said, 'Behold My servant whom I uphold, Mine elect in whom My soul delighteth: I have put My Spirit upon Him' (Is. xlii. 1). And again, 'The Redeemer shall come to Zion and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the Lord. As for me, this is My covenant with them, saith the Lord: My Spirit that is upon thee, and My words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever' (Is. lix. 20, 21).

Messiah therefore must take upon Himself man's nature so as to restore the image of God to the living participation of God's love, and the life thus given would be transmitted from Him to His offspring to the end of time. Thus should we be

'made the righteousness of God in Him' (2 Cor. v. 21).

O Jesu, Thou who art the image of the invisible God, being in all eternity the brightness of the Father's glory and the express manifestation of His Person, make me to feel the glory of that life whereinto Thou callest me, that I may be changed into Thine image more and more until I attain to be wholly like to Thee, seeing Thee as Thou art.

O My son, by My Spirit within thee I will form thee for Myself. I will make My likeness to be clear and My glory to shine out upon thee.

Blessed Jesu, let me ever be true to Thy holy inspirations. When I follow my own natural mind, I lose Thy control, and Thine image upon me becomes marred with many sins. O that I might be wholly conformed to Thee! O that I could feel Thy life as the impulse of all my actions!

Look to Me, My son, so shalt thou find My power. Remember Me at all times, and listen for My Spirit speaking in thy heart.

How good Thou art, most gracious Lord, that Thou dost still vouchsafe to speak to me with Thy holy suggestions, whereas I am so constantly neglectful of Thee.

Take heed, My son, that thou provoke Me not. I refused to dwell with Israel in the wilderness because they rejected Me; but how much more must I turn and fight against thee if thou dost not obey Me. I dwell with Israel

in the midst of the camp, and yet I was separate from them. I dwell in thine heart that thou mayest do what I bid thee, and thus be perfected after My good pleasure by thine obedience.

Yea, Lord, Thou hast taken upon Thyself our nature, and Thou showest us by Thine example what is the true life of man. Help me ever by Thy Spirit to follow in the steps of Thy most holy life, that I may grow up unto Thee in all things, increasing with the increase of God.

My Spirit shall ever help thee onward to perfection if thou wilt thus yield thyself up to Him.

O Thou who hast laid the foundation of the earth and formed the spirit of man within him, let me not be rebellious so as to vex Thy Holy Spirit whom Thou hast placed within me. Lead me from strength to strength in the fulness of power by Thy Spirit, that Thou mayest be glorified in the renewal of the mind whereby Thou dost transform me according to the purpose of Thy grace.

2. THE PREDESTINED HEAD.

Man was formed to rule the world as the representative of God, and the purpose of God could not be frustrated through man's fall. The Seed of the woman which was to bruise the serpent's head must rise to the throne of creation. The first Adam could not regain his position. The son of Adam must win it back again by a power greater than that of nature.

‘The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven’ (1 Cor. xv. 47). God’s word was pledged to man, and he must ever be mindful of His covenant. The sight of the glorious creation rouses the Psalmist to express his wonder at the dealings of God, and yet He speaks of those dealings as faithfulness and truth, for memory implies the covenanted promise. ‘What is frail [and therefore fallen] man that Thou rememberest him, or the son of earthborn man that Thou visitest him’ (Ps. viii. 4). The memory tells of the original predestination: the visitation tells of the Incarnation by which it is fulfilled.

How different is God’s regard of man, and man’s regard of God! ‘What is earthborn man that Thou takest knowledge of him, or the son of frail [fallen] man that thou takest account of him?’ (Ps. cxliv. 2). God takes account of man as having been created to sit upon His own eternal throne. When God came down to earth, man only ‘took account of Him as of one stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted’ (Is. liii. 4).

The Son of man was made for a little while lower than God. The Son of God emptied Himself of His Divine glory and took upon Himself the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of man. This temporary humiliation, however, was to be followed by an eternal exaltation. He was to be crowned with glory and honour. The prayer [for so it really is], ‘Set thy glory above the heavens’ (Ps. viii. 1), found its fulfilment at our Lord’s Ascension, when the Son of man received ‘a name *which is above every name*’ (Phil. ii. 7, 9).

The promised Conqueror must be the Son of man in order to attain the glory which was waiting for man. In the night visions of man's dark career the prophet saw the forms of empire pass away, but the heavenly prerogative was not forfeited. 'Behold one like the Son of man, [frail fallen man,] came with the clouds of heaven and came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him: and there was given Him dominion and glory and a kingdom. His dominion is that which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed' (Dan. vii. 12, 13).

O Jesu, all power is given to Thee. To Thee would I give my heart. It is Thine, for Thou art the Head to whom I must wholly belong. Thou art the Heir of the original predestination, and all subsequent promises belong to Thee alone. Thou art the Isaac in whom all the nations of the world should be blessed, and the Jacob before whom all Thy mother's sons should bow down, and the Judah whom Thy brethren should acknowledge with adoring praise, and the Boaz who should be a restorer of life to her that was in bitterness, and the David, the strong man raised up on high, the Anointed of the God of Jacob, the sweetness of the songs of Israel, for all sing of Thee.

Yea, My son, all that have been before Me in the flesh were preparing the way for Me, and I was before them in the Eternal Spirit, living from everlasting in the bosom of the Father. Now do I take up the nature which was of old

prepared for me, and I reign therein that I may make My blessings to flow forth to all around.

O Jesu, Son of man, surely our heart would not dare to speak of Thee as such until Thy glory was manifested, but now it is our greatest joy to know that in the glory of the Father Thou ever wearest that form still marked with suffering wherein Thou hast made atonement for our sins. Worthy art Thou to receive all honour and glory, for Thou hast redeemed us unto God and made us kings and priests unto our God, that we may reign with Thee for ever and ever.

8. THE HEIR OF ALL THINGS.

Messiah is the Son of man, frail fallen man. But although He is the second Adam, as having a nature taken from earth in addition to the Divine nature wherein He comes from heaven, He cannot Himself be frail man. The title therefore which is given to Him in Daniel (vii. 13), represents the glorified Redeemer as the representative Son of this frail race, but when His own human character is spoken of it is with a designation implying His strength and perfection, as in Zechariah (xiii. 7), 'the man (the mighty man) that is My Fellow.' This latter word may express strength of any kind, and whether used for good purposes or bad. So David uses it of himself as 'the chosen man raised up on high' (2 Sam. xxiii. 1).

When strength is the ground of self-confidence it is a curse, but 'blessed is the man of strength who

trusteth in the Lord' (Ps. xxxiv. 8); 'blessed is the man of strength who placeth his confidence in the Lord, and turneth not unto the proud and to such as go about with lies' (xl. 4). If it is said of 'a man that he hath no strength,' it is not that he never had it, but that he by death has lost it' (lxxxviii. 4). Strength is so deceitful that the Psalmist says, 'Blessed is the man of strength whom thou chastenest, O Lord' (xciv. 12); 'blessed is the man of strength who has his quiver full' (cxxvii. 5); 'thus shall the man of strength be blessed that feareth the Lord' (cxxviii. 4).

Such is the Son of man in Himself, for these passages in fact belong to Him as their principal object, for He alone amongst men can claim these blessings in their fulness. Nevertheless He is seen upon the throne of glory as the Child of human weakness, for He is 'a root out of a dry ground' (Is. liii. 2). It is not by virtue of human strength that He is enthroned, but by virtue of Divine inheritance. The title 'Son of man' is therefore so expressed as to avoid any intimation of strength which is after all accidental to man. It brings forward only the idea of Messiah representing the race in the feebleness of its natural creation, and consequently of its fallen condition, for nothing is weak except through sin.

O how full of encouragement it is for us to know that the Son of man, the heir of all our sorrows, is thus placed in the glory of the eternal triumph. How can we complain of our weakness, since Jesus bore it all!

Had His humanity been exempt from the suffer-

ings which we have to bear, we could find little comfort in contemplating His joy, for we should feel that He was as far from us in His glory as He had been amidst the magic security of His earthly life. But we know He Himself 'bare our griefs and carried our sorrows' (Is. liii. 4), and 'as He was, so are we in this world' (1 John iv. 17). Therefore we can take up the song of the early persecuted Church, 'If we suffer with Him, we shall also reign with Him' (2 Tim. ii. 12).

Had Christ entered into His glory without suffering, how would that glory have lost its moral value for our spiritual elevation. How are we bound to praise the eternal love which could thus minister grace to us one by one, through Him who in the hour of agony could say, 'I am a worm and no man, a very scorn of men and the outcast of the people' (Ps. xxii. 6).

O Jesu, Thou hast taken upon Thyself our nature and glorified it in the fellowship of the Eternal. Sanctify me by Thy Holy Spirit, that I may show forth Thy glory in my weakness and may rise from my weakness to share Thy glory.

Q *My son, thou must die to all that constitutes the strength of nature, so shalt thou attain in Me to the enjoyment of the glory beyond nature which was prepared for man from the beginning.*

O Lord, as Moses prayed so pray I still, Show me Thy glory. This is that vision for which my soul longs. Show me Thy glory manifested in

human form, for only in the form of one like to myself can I really see it and know it. When I behold Thee on the throne of God as the firstborn among many brethren, the true Son of man, then I learn what is the glory to which Thou callest me. The more I do behold Thee, so much the more do I long to behold Thee more truly. Show me the glory of the Father as it resides in Thee, not as if it were a greater vision than the vision of Thyself, but as it is the only true vision wherein I may attain to know Thee perfectly. Thou, Son of man, art very and eternal God, and I behold the perfection of Thy manhood when I see Thy nature in the greatness of Thy strength making fully manifest the glory of the Divine Sonship which is Thine from eternity.

My son, all things are Mine, and as they are Mine so I give them to thee that thou mayest share them with Me.

O Jesu, how great is that Divine love wherein Thou dwellest. The glory of creation round about Thy throne serves to make manifest the glory of the life of God wherein Thou livest everlastingly. In all that is around me, let me recognise the riches of Thine own eternity. With Thee let me enjoy all things as Thine own creature in time, that in Thee I may enjoy all things eternally, perfected by Thy grace in Thine own image as my Creator.

MEDITATION XXIV.

The Son of God.

Beginning from Moses and from all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.—St. Luke xxiv. 27.

1. THE ONLY-BEGOTTEN.

It is doubtful whether the phrase Son of God occurs in the Old Testament, for in the remarkable passage in Daniel where the words occur, they may perhaps, as being uttered by Nebuchadnezzar, have only a pagan meaning. The Babylonian monarch would be familiar with many 'sons of the gods,' and may very likely have risen no higher in his conception than the teaching of his national mythology.

The idea, however, is deeply rooted in Holy Scripture throughout both Testaments. Indeed we may well believe that the phrase was avoided until the Incarnation, from fear lest its coincidence with the nomenclature of heathen religions should degrade the conception of the promised Son by assimilating it to that which heathen fancy had developed.

In previous Meditations we have seen how the idea of the Divine Sonship permeates the life of the nation of Israel, and flows on from Isaac, the heir of Abraham's promises, to a greater offspring, the Seed

of Abraham, in whom the nation shall once more become concentrated and personified.

The Seed of the woman, the Servant of the Lord, the Firstborn of God, is no mere abstraction. The Shepherd of Israel, the Messianic King, the Great High Priest, the Angel of the Covenant, the Redeemer, is no vague succession of individuals bearing exalted office and exercising transitory influence. The various indications of the coming Conqueror point to an individual whose personal abiding character is shown when the Son of man is enthroned along with the Ancient of Days in a kingdom which shall have no end. This is a personal, not a national exaltation. He who ascends the throne is the Son.

When we read of the Son, it is not the son of any inferior race who is thus described. It is as the Psalmist speaks, 'the King's Son' (Ps. lxxii. 1), the Son of God.

This is that royal Personage to whom the whole Psalter points, as is indicated by the second, prefatory Psalm: 'I have set My King upon My holy hill of Zion. Therefore kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and so ye perish from the right way' (Ps. ii. 12).

Is He then one elect from creation to fill the vacant throne?

This question seems to be the same as in the Apocalypse when 'the strong angel proclaimed with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book or to loose the seven seals thereof? And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon' (Rev. v. 2, 8).

no eternal fitness or necessity. A throne of God. 'He giveth no another' (Is. xlii. 8). None can except by virtue of such oneness constitute hereditary claim.

When we see Christ as the S assured that, since He is God, person be a conscious reality. We might God was an impersonal being, with we could hold none of the relation upon personality. Nothing assures the Divine Personality more than that made the Son of man 'to sit with throne' (Rev. iii. 21). The Person may involve considerations inferior human personality, but they must with what we know to be essential in our lower sphere, since they are who wears a nature like our own.

He is the Son of God. He is the Eternal Father in the Divine Nature that human sonship is a true

of life in the creature is an imperfect gift of self. In God there can be but 'one Son,' for the gift of life from the Father to the Son is a gift eternally complete. 'Hast thou but one blessing, O my father?' (Gen. xxvii. 38). So spake the wailing reprobate. He little knew that the dignity which he had scornfully put away from him, the blessing of which he could not now recall even any portion, was absolutely and incommunicably one, because it was the outcome in created form of the one and undivided Godhead. There could be but one blessing, because there could be but one Son of the Blessed, only one who could thus Himself be 'over all, God blessed for ever' (Rom. ix. 5).

When therefore the prophet exclaims, 'To us a Child is born, to us a Son is given' (Is. ix. 6), he is summing up the ancient faith. The clearness of his teaching is far in advance of what had been before, and yet that ancient faith enshrined in its earliest anticipations the changeless truth whose continual developments were not an ornamental efflorescence, but expressed the fundamental law of its conception. 'God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but should have everlasting life' (St. John iii. 16).

O Jesu, very and eternal God, begotten from everlasting of the Father, mercifully look Thou upon me, and as the Father hath given Thee to have life in Thyself, so grant that life to me, that I may have

in Thee that life which in my own created being I could not have.

© My son, blessed art thou if thou knowest the truth of that life which I the Son of man possess. Come unto Me, and I will give thee life. Yea, abide in Me, and thou shalt find the reality of that life which My members share. Defile not thy garments: so will I not blot out thy name out of the book of life, but will confess thy name before My Father and before the holy angels.

O Lord Jesu, to whom can we fly for succour but to Thee, for Thou hast the words of eternal life, and we believe and are sure that Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

2. THE DAVIDIC PROMISES.

The idea of sonship rested upon the whole nation, but it could not have its fulfilment outside of the Divine Nature. The highest of all sons could not be a Son in an untrue or metaphorical sense. Sonship in God must be of a higher kind than human sonship, and the sonship of Messiah in God could not be an inferior sonship. If Messiah were not more than man the Messianic promises would be reduced to the dimensions of Mosaic servitude. The relation of Messiah to God would be a terminable relationship if He were after all only the Servant of the Lord. 'The servant abideth not in the house for ever, but the Son abideth ever' (John viii. 35.) *There is no eternal bond uniting God and His*

creatures. They came out of nothing and may fall back into nothing again. Sonship is an eternal relationship within the Divine Nature, and when the Eternal Son assumes a created nature, He gives eternity to creation. The Divine Sonship is the rock upon which God's Church is built, a foundation strong with eternal life, the only foundation which can be indestructible.

This Sonship whose glory hovered around the ancient covenant began to find a special voice in the time of David. It was as if the voice which in earlier times had spoken with infant babblings, gave earnest in David of its future capacities. That voice began from Abraham to speak with an ever-increasing power of articulation. Now in David it speaks clearly.

God gives to David the promise of an offspring singled out from the whole race. 'I will be to Him a Father, and He shall be to me a Son' (2 Sam. vii. 14). 'He shall call Me, Thou art My Father, My God, and My strong salvation. I will make Him My Firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth' (Ps. lxxxix. 26). This Son of David shall call God His Father then in a true and special significance higher than the rest of the nation could venture to claim. The sonship which could not take its rise from earth must come forth from heaven. It should be accomplished not by the bringing of the Godhead into the flesh of a human person, but by taking of the manhood into the glory of a Divine Person. Solomon did not satisfy the terms of the promise. He could but typify a greater Son of David whose form rose up in

stool' (Ps. cx. 1; St. Matt. xxii. 4).

This Son of David is 'the rod of Jesse, the Branch becoming fruitful' (Is. xi. 1), on whom 'the Spirit rest,' as was said to St. John Baptist thou shalt see the Spirit descending upon Him, the same is He which 'Holy Ghost' (John i. 33). The Holy Ghost with Him is no mere as when He came upon the pre-abiding, guiding Presence, filling humanity with Divine wisdom 'quickening Him in the fear of the Lord' (Ps. cxiii. 29), that is, not retaining yet even though 'put to death in the flesh' (1 Cor. ii. 13) He is 'quickened in the Spirit' (1 Cor. viii. 10). The Spirit makes 'righteousness to be loins and faithfulness the girdle' (Is. xi. 5), so that as the Son of God in the flesh He is indeed 'the Lord

beside His glory. 'He was to raise up the tribes of Jacob' as 'the Holy One,' not only in Israel but 'of Israel' (Is. xlix. 6, 7). The prophet therefore declares that 'He shall see His seed' (Is. liii. 10), and that seed would be living with a Divine life. The seed of the first Adam could not have the Divine life, for they were born of a dead father, but the seed of the second Adam, the son of David, cannot fail to have the Divine life, for they are born of the incarnate Son of God. Thus shall be fulfilled what God had proclaimed of old, 'I said ye are gods.' 'The congregation of the righteous' (Ps. i. 1) shall be 'a congregation of gods.' 'Amongst them God shall judge.' They are one with Himself (Ps. lxxxii. 1). The Divine Nature shall be communicated although incapable of being multiplied, and all the redeemed in glory shall be 'partakers of the Divine Nature' (2 Pet. i. 4), through Him who is the Head of the Body, the Word incarnate. He it is 'Whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the world' (St. John x. 36), and they are 'His seed,' so that they are 'counted unto the Lord for a generation' (Ps. xxii. 30). The prophet accordingly gives to the heavenly city, the Church of God, the same name which He bears, 'the Lord our righteousness.' 'They are the branches' (John xv. 1) of that 'Branch of righteousness which should grow up unto David' (Jer. xxxiii. 15, 16). 'The house of David shall be as God, as the Angel of the Lord before them' (Zech. xii. 8). His Divine life shall be theirs, for they in Him have been 'baptised into one Body and have been made to drink into one Spirit' (1 Cor. xii. 13).

*O Jesu, Son of David, how sure are Thy mercies.
In Thee will I trust.*

My son, thou must learn to wait upon Me and I will deliver thee. Even as I delivered David from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, so will I deliver thee.

O Jesu, give me faith and patience that I may wait upon Thee. Great are Thy promises, but greater are Thy gifts to those who trust in Thee.

My son, thou must consider well the dignity of that sonship to which I have admitted thee. I was made of the seed of David after the flesh, but I have taken thee into Myself that thou mayest have the seed of God abiding in thee and mayest live as the son of God according to the Spirit of holiness.

O Blessed Jesu, how wonderful is Thy love. There is nothing whereby I can show my gratitude to Thee. If I dedicate my life to Thee, yet that is already Thine and I only hold it as Thy gift. Thou givest that I may give back to Thee, and the more I give back to Thee of Thy gifts the more dost Thou give to me of Thine overflowing bounty. All praise to Thee, the Son of God, who hast fulfilled unto Thy servant David the promises which Thou didst make to him, and hast made their power and blessing to rest even upon me unworthy. My birth in nature and my birth in grace are both from Thee. From Thee is the gift of my priesthood and the grace of my Religious vocation. All is from Thee and all to be perfected in Thee. O let me live as befits Thy beloved one.

3. THE VICTORY OF THE SON OF GOD.

The Son of God comes into the world to conquer the powers of darkness. Adam was unable to accomplish the victory because he fell under the snare of the evil one. Eve was deceived, and he himself yielded so as to share her fall. By the lie which Satan uttered against God they were destroyed, and man could not again rise to win the victory. The mind of man could not fathom the depths of Satan so as to be secure against his cunning. The Son of God, the very Truth incarnate, came to give the life which man had lost, and to destroy by the brightness of His Presence the power of the false fiend.

What is that brightness? It is the brightness of the eternal Godhead. How is it to shine? It shines through the veil of flesh. That light was not to shine externally for Satan's overthrow. It was to be hidden as the lamps within the earthen pitchers of Gideon's host (Jud. vii. 19). He who bears the sin of man speaks by the lips of the Psalmist, 'Thou requirest Truth in the inward parts, and shalt make me to understand Wisdom secretly' (Ps. li. 6). 'In Him was Life, and the Life was the Light of men' (John i. 4).

That Light of eternal Truth was to carry on a mysterious struggle with the darkness of the creature, and was to gain the victory in the appearance of created weakness. The son of David was to be a

sufferer, even as His ancestor had lived a life of constant war.

The Psalter opens with the announcement of Messiah's struggling claim, and the rebellion which would rage against Him. Saul the type of the natural man, and Absalom the type of the uprising Antichrist, set before us the difficulties which He was to encounter, the delay and the seeming discomfiture which He would have to endure. God had set His King upon His holy hill of Zion, His eternally begotten Son. The rulers of the earth must kiss the Son lest He be angry (Ps. ii. 12). What profit was there in His Blood, when He went down to the pit? (Ps. xxx. 9). The wisdom of man could not tell, but the wisdom of God would thereby accomplish man's redemption. Though He should die, yet death should not gain the victory over Him, for He could say with confidence. 'Thou wilt not leave My soul in hell, neither wilt Thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption' (Ps. xvi. 10). Although He had within Himself the power of God, He would ride on because of meekness-righteousness' (Ps. xlv. 4). We see the victory of Him who entered Jerusalem, meek and riding upon an ass, as He went on to die upon Calvary. 'He would be a stranger unto His brethren, even an alien unto His mother's children' (Ps. lxix. 8), but though He should cry out in His weakness 'My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?' (Ps. xxii. 1), He would ascend as the king of glory through the everlasting doors' (Ps. xxiv. 9). The Father would call Him to *sit down* upon His Right Hand, but the warfare would

not even then be ended. He would take the mediatorial throne as the Lord of David and the Son of God, waiting 'until His foes should be made His footstool' (Ps. cx. 1).

So would it be through suffering that He must enter into His glory. The Stone must be rejected by the builders which was to become the Headstone of the corner' (Ps. cxviii. 22).

Although Ephraim was for so many years powerful among the tribes—'when he spake, there was trembling'—(Hos. xiii. 1), yet God chose the tribe of Judah and the hill of Zion which he loved' (Ps. lxxviii. 68). How feeble did Judah seem through many generations when Ephraim and Syria boasted themselves in overbearing power (Is. vii. 4), yet there was a promise that a virgin should conceive and bear a Son, and call His name Immanuel' (vii. 14). By the Incarnation God once again visited His people, from the midst of whom He had withdrawn His Presence when they sinned in the matter of the golden calf. That little one should have His face marred more than any man's, but He should become a thousand. If He would say to death 'I will be thy plagues' (Hos. xiii. 14), He must first of all Himself be 'cut off like them that are wounded and lie in the grave, who are out of remembrance and cut away from God's hand. God would put away His lovers and His friends from Him, and hide His acquaintance out of His sight' (Ps. lxxxviii. 8), and not until after this abandonment shall 'kings fall down before Him and all nations do Him service' (Ps. lxxii. 11). Then at length shall His enemies

confess, as the centurion did standing by the Cross, 'Truly this man was the Son of God.' His victory shall be complete when the Church of God is seen descending from heaven as a Bride adorned for her husband, possessing all the gifts of God wherewith the Humanity of Christ is glorified. Then shall it be seen that the Church, amidst all outward division and evil, was nevertheless possessed of a Divine Life, as Jesus prayed for His disciples that they might be one in the unity of the Living Name of God, that the world might believe that the Father had sent Him, and that He, the suffering child of man, was indeed the eternal Son of God.

O Jesu, Son of God, who hast triumphed in our nature by the power of the Eternal Spirit, grant that I may be true to Thee and worship Thee as my Lord, my God, relying upon Thy power that I may share Thy victory.

My son, fear not. However the world may assail thee, I will be thy strong rock and thy defence, thy fortress and thy deliverer, the horn of thy salvation and thy refuge.

O Lord, how can I worthily set forth Thy love. Out of the strength of the enemy's antagonism comes forth the sweetness of Thy consolation. Thou hast delivered me out of the mouth of the lion. Thou art the Lion of God whom Thy brethren must worship. Thine enemies are scattered from before Thee.

My son, I have fought for thee to deliver thee, and thou must fight for Me to glorify Me.

Even so, Lord Jesu. Thou goest forth conquer-

ing and to conquer, and though I am so feeble, I cannot fail of the victory if I follow Thee and carry on the warfare in Thy strength.

Go forth, My son. Only be strong and of a good courage. I will make all thy foes to bow before thy feet.

Lord, I believe. Perfect Thou my faith that I may show the glory of Thy Divine Life, and at length attain to behold Thee in the glory wherein Thou ever abidest as the only-begotten Son of the Father, in the unity of the Holy Ghost.

MEDITATION XXV.

The Wonderful.

Beginning from Moses and from all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.—St. Luke xxiv. 27.

1. THE MYSTERY OF GOD'S BEING.

THE nature of God is to man essentially incomprehensible, so much so that any statement or theory of God's Being which does not involve the element of incomprehensibility stands convicted of falsehood by the lack of this Divine attribute.

In the Athanasian Creed the word *incomprehensible* signifies *immense*. Since God does not exist in space, He cannot be comprehended by any extension of space however great. Nevertheless this does of itself involve incomprehensibility in its more modern sense, as belonging to that which cannot be comprehended by the understanding, for what exists outside of space cannot be comprehended by the human mind. We may know certain facts respecting it. We may judge of it by the result of its operations, but in itself it cannot be known. All our knowledge is derived from things whose existence is subject to the laws of space, and any higher form of being is to our natural reason inconceivable.

We can indeed perceive the necessity of such

higher existence, but we cannot explain it. We cannot conceive of our finite world without the infinite, but we cannot conceive of that which is infinite in itself. The finite and the infinite imply one another, at least to us who dwell within the finite, so that we cannot conceive of the one except in terms of the other. The infinite or the absolute does not imply the finite in itself. Our faith teaches us that it did exist before the finite, and does exist independently of the finite. But the finite does necessarily imply the infinite, for it is incapable of existing in itself. Philosophy cannot regard it as having an independent existence complete within itself, and faith teaches us that the finite is the creature of the infinite.

The revelation of the infinite is gradual and progressive. God makes Himself known by various phenomena, although they are all of them distinct from Himself. They give evidence of certain qualities in the Divine power external to creation which gives them their impulse ; but they do not indicate what is His essence, nor do they enable the creature to hold personal intercourse with Him. It is necessary that God should take the creature into Himself. It must live with His own life. He must not merely speak through it as a medium, but in it as His own true and perfect organism, and that so entirely that it may have no other principle of action save only the Divine life.

This manifestation of God in the flesh is the great wonder of all ages, the mystery of mysteries. The first name accordingly which is given to the

incarnate Son of God may well be this. Christ is perfect God and perfect man in one Person, so that as he says, 'He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father' (John xiv. 9), and His name is Wonderful.

The knowledge of Christ is beyond the reach of human understanding, for it is the knowledge of God. In Him are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (Col. ii. 3). 'Such knowledge is too wonderful and excellent for me,' says the Psalmist, 'I cannot attain unto it' (Ps. cxxxix. 6). Job characterises the mystery of Divine revelation in the same way (Job xlii. 3).

When the Angel of the Lord appeared to Manoah and his wife, He said, 'Why askest thou after my Name, since it is Wonderful' (Jud. xiii. 18). And when the sacrifice was offered 'He did wondrously,' ascending in the flame of the altar, and showing its acceptance before God (xiii. 19).

The mystery of God's nature attaches to His outward actions. The formation of man makes the Psalmist exclaim, I am fearfully and wonderfully made (Ps. cxxxix. 14), and that which is true of the formation of man according to the course of nature is infinitely more to be spoken of the formation of the second Man, the Seed of the woman, the incarnate God. It is the crowning wonder amidst the four things mentioned by Solomon, 'the way of the mighty man' coming into the world 'by a virgin' birth (Prov. xxx. 19). This wonder is that new thing which God would bring to pass, that 'a woman should compass a man' (Jer. xxxi. 22).

So must we confess that 'the Lord our God has

dealt wondrously with us' (Joel ii. 26), and as His goodness is full of mystery, so is His judgment. He warns His ancient people saying, 'The Lord will make thy plagues wonderful' (Deut. xxviii. 59). The words point on beyond the outward penalties of time. The eternity of punishment is a mystery necessitated by the mystery of the Eternal from whom it comes.

So do all God's actions necessarily partake of the mystery of His own nature, as that which is incomprehensible makes itself manifest amidst the limitations of the creature. 'Great is the mystery of Godliness, God manifest in the flesh' (1 Tim. iii. 16).

O Jesu, king most wonderful, how can I contemplate the adorable mystery of Thine Incarnation!

My son, thou canst not see the kingdom of God save by the power of the Holy Ghost. Only by Him canst thou call me Lord.

Truly Lord, it is a great mystery how Thou canst open my understanding to know Thyself. Surely Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes, for so it seemed good in Thy sight. Give me then a childlike heart, that I may indeed rejoice in the mysteries of the kingdom.

My son, they that know Me and behold My glory must be full of eyes within, so that they may contemplate the Divine life which I grant them to share.

Hidden art Thou, O Lord, from all who seek to know Thee only by the external reasonings of the

outward apprehension, but blessed are our eyes if they are opened to acknowledge by faith that love of Thine which unites us unto Thyself. Verily Thou showest Thyself marvellous upon me, yet would I not exercise myself in great matters too wonderful for me, but as a weaned child will I look away from the earth and look to Thee who only dost wondrous things. Thou wilt show me marvellous great kindness, even Thine own grace and truth, in the strong city of Thy redeemed.

2. THE MYSTERY OF GOD'S REVELATION.

The manner of God's revelation is as mysterious as its substance. He prepares His creatures to receive their several communications from Himself according to His purpose. Creation is not developed in its continual progress by any mere accident, but by the secret purpose of Almighty God constantly working towards one end, and that end is the glorification of His Word, by whom they were all made, and in whom they all attain that completeness which gives them their unity (Col. i. 16).

Creation and revelation are thus going on simultaneously. Every new order of creation, although not apprehending God after the manner of human intelligence, has its own instinctive law both of apprehension and service. 'The lions roaring after their prey do seek their meat from God' (Ps. civ. 21).

We are not to despise the lower orders of creation. It is our own ignorance which holds us back from seeing what God's purpose for them may be.

The knowledge which we require transcends what we possess much further than our present knowledge surpasses that of the brutes. We must not be proud, as we are apt to be, of our position in the universe, for he that thinketh he knoweth anything knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know. We know but in part (1 Cor. xiii. 12), but that is no true knowledge which does not grasp the universe of being in an undivided act of intuition.

The counsels of God are as full of wonder as they are of wisdom. They are the outcome of a creative mind working steadily towards the end which it has foreannounced. So Isaiah praises God's Name because 'He has done wonderful things ; His counsels from of old are faithfulness and truth' (Is. xxv. 1). One law, continually developing fresh powers from God, works upward throughout nature and grace, displaying the resources of Him from whom, as the sole source, the manifold universe of being is derived. 'The Lord of hosts is wonderful in counsel and excellent in working' (Is. xxviii. 29).

In each developing stage of creation we must therefore recognise a fresh development of God's self-manifestation. Not indeed that we are to confound God with His works, or to suppose that in, or even through, them we can see Him. They are but the gradual revelation of His operations, all of them tending towards His final manifestation of Himself when He assumes our nature and brings the truth of Divine life into the emptiness of created form.

The wonder of God's manifestation is not confined to our earth's surface. The Incarnation must

make itself felt in the spirit world. Jesus said, 'I am the resurrection and the life' (John xi. 25). The Son of God could not come into this world of death without manifesting his power to communicate fresh life to it. He could not enter into it and leave it dead. The Psalmist asks a question to which in the very nature of things there can be but one answer if Messiah really has subjected himself to our mortal conditions. 'Dost Thou show wonders amongst the dead, or shall the dead rise up again and praise Thee?' (Ps. lxxxviii. 10).

The resurrection follows naturally upon the Incarnation, if the Incarnation be a real truth and not an appearance only. 'Shall Thy wondrous works be known in the dark, and Thy righteousness in the land of forgetfulness?' (lxxxviii. 12). Yes. The New Testament furnishes the answer. 'He died for our sins and He rose again for our justification.' For this cause was the gospel preached to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the Spirit' (1 Pet. iv. 6).

Wonderful is the revelation of God by the Incarnation, Redemption, Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Wonderful is Jesus, for He is the hidden God. Wonderful is He in His operations, for according to His will He makes manifest His power. The work which the incarnate God comes to do is worthy of the mysterious person of Him that does it. Mystery follows upon mystery, until the mind of fallen man, *expanded* by the communications of the Holy Ghost,

shall have been perfected to behold the fulness of God, that we may live thereby. 'Then shall we be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is' (1 St. John iii. 2). 'Then shall we know, even as also we are known' (1 Cor. xiii. 12).

O Jesu, Thy secret power accomplisheth all things. Never will I rely upon anything that is of the world. Thou rulest unseen, and givest forth from Thyself all that Thy creatures need, that we may rise to the glory of the vocation which Thou hast given us in Thyself. To Thee be all the praise.

My son, look to Me: so shalt thou be saved. I suffer thee to feel thy need, that I may draw thee thereby to look for help unto Myself. Mine enemies behold Me not, but My people should behold Me ever near. Thou must learn to look to Me in My hidden power, that thou mayest attain to behold Me in the fulness of glory.

O Jesu, I know that Thy grace is all-sufficient. Alas, that I should ever repine because of the discipline which Thy love ordains for me. Help me to choose Thee perfectly. Yet to reject Thy Cross is to reject Thyself. O let me take up daily the Cross which Thou givest, that I may experience the ineffable power of Thy glorious word for my deliverance.

3. THE MYSTERY OF GOD'S TRIUMPH.

God is ever looking forward to the consummation of all things. Every act of His power is a manifes-

tation of Divine energy which shall abide for ever. His actions do not pass away, for they are a manifestation of Himself.

Creatures do not manifest themselves in what they do. Their acts are shaped by circumstance. Their acts have no substance in themselves, but are wrought upon substances which God has created. In themselves they are empty.

Not such is the action of God. His eternal Being is a mysterious activity operating within Himself in His pure spiritual essence. Thus does His only-begotten Son dwell with Him eternally by an act of generation co-equal with Himself. His action cannot be less than Himself, for, if it were, His indivisible substance would be dissolved.

Therefore is the Son co-equal with the Father, and He is one with the Father. The Father exists in this eternal act without suffering loss or receiving any addition.

This act is the primary source of all God's external actions. Whatever the Father does, He does through the Son, His Word and Wisdom. The Divine Nature of the Father can never act outside of that eternal action whereby the Son is begotten and the Holy Ghost proceeds.

When God acts in creation, He is acting outside of His own nature, but His indissoluble nature suffers no injury. He creates all things by the Word of His power, which is His Son.

The mystery of nothingness, out of which the creature comes, is to us as inconceivable as is the *nature* of the Creator Himself. God gives substance

to that which had none. Yet the substance in which they exist is not themselves. All created things have a body. Even the purest spirits are not pure as God is. He, dwelling in the unity of the Holy Ghost, is alone without body or parts.

God did not call the world into existence in order to leave it in its emptiness. He purposed to raise it to the participation of His own glory. All His dealings with His creatures are manifestations of creative power, forming at the first, reforming that which falls away, and by reforming perfecting in fuller participation of life.

The triumph of God is not a triumph as of one power over another. That which rebels against God has no power. God triumphs by making the rebellion of His creatures an occasion for some new development of His power. Still he ever acts in the calmness of sovereign majesty. There is no struggle preceding the triumph. The creature struggles. God does but speak and all is done. The creature does not gain even a temporary triumph, as if God did not exert enough power to overcome him. God leaves the evil alone, and in one moment, when He speaks, the evil is destroyed.

He shows His mysterious power in the punishment of that which is lofty, as when He stretched out His Hand and smote Egypt with all His wonders (Ex. iii. 20), and when His people drew near unto Him with their lips, but their heart was far from Him, He says, 'I will proceed to do a wonderful work among this people, even a wonderful work and a wonder; for the wisdom of their wise men shall

THE LIFE BEYOND THE GRAVE.

h, and the understanding of their prudent men
be hid' (Is. xxix. 14).

The wonder of God's triumph consists, not in
power being greater than theirs, but in its being
a different kind. He triumphs without the seem-
g means of power. 'The foolishness of God is
wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger
than men' (1 Cor. i. 25). Hence the greatness of
God is ever to be seen in littleness, in that which
man despiseth.

Hence arises the unexpectedness of God's triumph.
'When men say peace and safety, then sudden de-
struction cometh upon them' (1 Thess. v. 3). So did
God triumph upon the Cross, for there was the hiding
of His power. If we would have God show us His
glory, He must hide us with Himself. We must
die to earthly power that we may live with the Divine.

O Jesu, let me believe more truly in the mystery
of Thy grace. So shall I no longer fear what man
can do. The powers of the world perish with the
world. Thou, unseen, triumphest over all.

Yea, My son, I delight to make Myself
manifest to those who are looking for Me, but
if men look not for Me, I leave them to perish
with the things to which they look.

O Jesu, he who has Thee needs nothing else.
Only let me hold Thee to myself as Thou holdest me.
So shall I lose all hold upon all else, and find in
Thee my satisfaction.

My son, I have created thee out of nothing
that I may be thine all. That which tho-

desirest outside of Me is nothing. Why dost thou desire it? That which thou seemest to possess, yea, all save Me, is nothing. Why dost thou rely upon it? Accept Me as thine all, and thou shalt find the wonder of My love.

O Jesu, when I behold Thee I wonder at Thy great goodness and my own unwillingness, and as I behold my vileness I learn to behold Thy glory. To behold Thee is to wonder, for Thou art beyond all power of sight, but in that wonder is our life, and gazing on Thee whom we see not, we grow into Thy likeness until we see Thee as Thou art.

Yea, My son, My name is Wonderful. It is Secret, such that the worldly heart and mind, the natural reason, cannot know Me, nor receive My revelation. Blessed art thou, for the Spirit of My Father which is in heaven hath given thee the understanding that thou mayest know Me as the Truth, and mayest abide in My truth as thy life.

O Jesu, grant me that exercising that faith which Thou givest according to the virtue which Thou commandest, I may attain to the knowledge whereby I may be perfected. So let me manifest in my outward conduct the glory of a life hidden with Thee in the secret place of the Divine glory. Show Thy glory within me, that Thou mayest show Thy glory to me. Hide me with Thyself, that I may behold the wonders of Thy hidden love.

MEDITATION XXVI.

The Counsellor.

Beginning from Moses and from all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.—St. Luke xxiv. 27.

1. THE ETERNAL WISDOM.

THE Angel of the Lord, the ruler of Israel, whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting (Mic. v. 2) is the Word of the Lord. By Him the heavens were made (Ps. xxxiii. 6). He, however, did not begin to be because He began to create. Creation is the manifestation in time of the Word, which in itself is eternal. God speaks within Himself eternally. His Word is the expression of His wisdom, the brightness of His glory. His wisdom does not express itself in feeble and imperfect utterances, such as are alone possible to the human mind. Our words are but as the empty shells of thought. The Word of God is the true and perfect expression, the image of His eternal consciousness, whereby He beholds Himself in His own essential glory—no empty mould, for that which is empty would be no likeness of Himself, whose very essence is that He exists indissolubly; yea! His form and His substance are one:—no empty reverberation, for His word *would not* express His changeless mind if it passed

away from Him in the transitory succession of partial utterances. He speaks within Himself by the Word co-equal and consubstantial with Himself, the changeless Offspring in whom His Eternal Wisdom lives, and through whom, by the procession of the Eternal Spirit, that Wisdom acts.

This Wisdom is a Person. It cannot be an impersonal emanation, for, if it were, the substance of God would not be a pure imperishable spirit. God has no body nor parts. His indivisible essence finds its eternal fruitfulness in the Word, which thus inhabiteth the same eternity, of one substance with Himself, in the glory which no bodily organism can contain.

The unity of God, as it is proclaimed in the text, 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord' (Deut. vi. 4), is a real unity, wherein the Divine Persons abide in indissoluble fellowship of consubstantial glory. It is no mere singularity of fruitless feebleness. In the power of the Divine majesty, which the plurality of Divine Persons does not break, we worship the unity of the Spirit in whose fellowship they abide.

Thus is the Wisdom of God ever fruitful in Wisdom. The Son is the Wisdom of God, not as a constituent element necessary to the completeness of the Divine Being, as if God without Him would be simply vacant. He is begotten of the Divine Wisdom by its own necessary activity, begotten in the completeness of its own indissoluble operation, begotten before the worlds in the fellowship of its own transcendent solidity of consciousness.

This Eternal Word is the instrument of the Divine will, by whom God made the worlds (Heb. i. 2). All things were created by Him and for Him (Col. i. 16). Through Him the Divine predestination operates, and in Him it finds itself consummated. God says by Isaiah, 'As I have counselled, so shall it arise' (Is. xiv. 24).

Well may the prophet ask, 'Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord, or, being His Counsellor, hath taught Him?' (Is. xl. 18). Surely He alone Whose Name is Wonderful (Jud. xiii. 18). There is one Lord and His Name one.

We are not to think of the Divine Persons as if they spoke one to the other. When the Father is represented as speaking to the Son, it is to the Son as being incarnate that He addresses Himself. The Son is the Word by whom the Father speaks. He is the Counsel of the Eternal Trinity, the utterance of the Father's Eternal Wisdom. In Him the Eternal Trinity makes the everlasting purpose manifest to the creatures; as when God said, 'Let us make man' (Gen. i. 26).

In the Proverbs Wisdom says, 'Counsel is mine and sound wisdom' (Prov. viii. 14). Upon His Person He bears the whole record of the Divine predestination, the counsel of God for the glory which is to be made manifest throughout all ages. The plans of God are not developed by the experience of ages, but the ages are developed for the accomplishment of that counsel which God hath purposed eternally in His only-begotten Word. 'This also cometh forth from the Lord of hosts, which is wonderful in

counsel and excellent in sound wisdom ' (Is. xxviii. 29).

The Son of God is thus the Eternal Counsellor in whom the Divine Wisdom speaks.

As we meditate upon this mystery, we can see the Divine fitness of the Incarnation. All the works of God in the development of the world lay hid in Him. The consummation of all things is the very manifestation of that which has been hid in Him from the foundation of the world. The pages of time cannot reveal this record. The full purpose of God cannot be made known save by the coming of the only-begotten Son of God, taking upon Himself created form as a vesture—that is, by the revelation of Jesus Christ.

O Jesu, Thou dwellest in the light that no man can approach unto. Speak, as Thou didst speak to Moses in the pillar of the cloud. Even so speak Thou in my heart.

My son, the counsel of God standeth firm. It is unchangeable as Myself. Nothing shall fail of all that He hath spoken by Me. Abide therefore in Me, and thou shalt receive all the goodness which God is purposing to give through Me.

O Jesu, I will look to Thee, that from Thee I may learn that which the Father has counselled. Thy counsels of old are faithfulness and truth, and grace and truth are come by Thee, that those ancient counsels may be accomplished.

Yea, My son, My counsel shall stand, and

yet the powers of creation do not suffice to attain that which God hath provided. As then He has provided all in Me, I must take thy nature upon Myself, that all may be attained through union with Me. I have chosen thee out of the world that thou mayest live in Me. All My gifts would be wanting in life if Myself were absent from them. Come then unto Me, that thou mayest have life.

Lord, I come to Thee. Make haste to deliver me. I sleep, but my heart waketh. It is the voice of the Beloved that knocketh saying, Open to me my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled one.

I have united thee unto Myself according to the greatness of My love. I have united thee unto Myself that thou mayest be undefiled in the way, so shall My perfection outshine all thine impurity.

Guide me with Thy counsel, loving Lord. As Thou hast called me in regeneration, in priesthood, in Religious profession, call me ever onward. O Thou Word of the Father, come Thou ever unto me. Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth.

2. THE CREATIVE WORD.

The Only-begotten is the Wisdom of the Father, not merely the reflection of His Wisdom, but the living image of Himself, in the personal activity of consubstantial Wisdom rejoicing before Him by the procession of the Eternal Spirit of Divine Love, as the *Holy Ghost* is the personal emanation of Divine Love

proceeding from the Father in the fulness of the Wisdom which is thus begotten of Him. The Wisdom and the Love are both of them personal agents, not suffering loss as all agents must suffer from whom a force evaporates. They remain self-contained in their action, unchangeable, abiding with mutual love in the glory of the Father from whom the Eternal Life is derived wherein they are ever active and ever one. They are not radiations of energy exhausting the being from whom they proceed. Personally they participate in the Father's glory with the same active energy of reciprocal joy as that whereby He gives to them to have Life in themselves.

As then the Word is the instrument by whom the Father made the worlds, we must recognise Him as the All-wise. He who was to take upon Himself our nature as our Redeemer is the personal manifestation throughout eternity of the Father's wisdom, and throughout the lapse of time He makes the Father's wisdom manifest, ruling amidst the affairs of this world's history in all its widest and deepest reaches of physical and moral extent.

He is not the unconscious organ of the Father's wisdom, but Himself personally shares in that wisdom and carries it into effect.

He is the Counsellor by whom the events of the world are regulated, as well as their original Creator. He is not passively the recipient of the Father's wisdom as a created intelligence might be. He is actively identified with the Father's wisdom by community of nature, for such wisdom is not an accident in God as wisdom is accidental in man. He and the

Father are one in their wisdom, for they are one in their essence, one in their life.

This Counsellor is the Wisdom who cries out in the Proverbs, 'The Lord possessed Me in the beginning of His way, before His works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning or ever the earth was. Then was I by Him as one brought up with Him, and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him, rejoicing in the habitable part of His earth, and my delights were with the sons of men' (Prov. viii. 22, 28, 30, 31).

Thus does the Old Testament anticipate the teaching of the New. 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made' (St. John i. 1-4).

How great is the comfort, amidst all the difficulties and threatenings of life in this world, to know that all things are ordered by the Divine counsel. We might think of God's power as ready to interfere at any time for our deliverance. This would bring with it a dull spirit of fatalistic resignation. It is to be feared that we very often do not rise above this. We ought, however, to recognise the Divine wisdom ordaining all that happens, even what seems to us to be most unfortunate, with a view to issues of good. The evil which He permits the powers of evil to accomplish, He ordains as good for the perfecting of His chosen ones.

'O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His

judgments, and His ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been His counsellor? Or who hath first given to Him, and it shall be recompensed unto Him again? For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things. To whom be glory for ever. Amen' (Rom. xi. 33-36).

O Jesu, Thou art the way of life, in whom we are being guided according to the discipline of Thine all-wise love. Always let me rejoice to rest satisfied in Thee.

My son, never fear. Whatever may happen round about thee, My wisdom is ruling over all, although thou in thine ignorance thinkest those things to be hurtful which shall turn to the greatest good. Trust then in Me with all thine heart, and lean not unto thine own understanding.

Indeed I am foolish when I doubt the wisdom of Thy providence. How often does it seem to me that the evil are marring Thy purposes, whereas they are only giving fresh opportunity for the manifestation of Thy wisdom.

Consider My own life when I humbled Myself to dwell upon the earth as man. If thou wilt bear in mind My example, thou wilt be able to accept my discipline.

Truly, O Lord, Thy foolishness is wiser than men. Thou takest the wise in their own craftiness, but those who trust in Thee with a childlike heart shall find Thee ordering all things for their good.

8. THE ILLUMINATIVE WORD.

He who is the Divine Counsellor in the government of the world is the Counsellor of the faithful by His Spirit working in their hearts. 'He of God is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, and sanctification and redemption' (1 Cor. i. 30).

His Spirit is the Spirit of truth, and He comes to us that He may guide us into all truth.

The Spirit does not guide us into truth merely by interior suggestions which we may follow out in our own strength. Rather He guides us into all truth by revealing Christ within us, and Christ is the truth. Therefore St. Paul says, 'We have the mind of Christ' (1 Cor. ii. 16).

The possession of this mind is the possession of a real faculty of truth, without which no external criterion of truth would be of any avail.

The mind of Christ does not indeed avail for us if instead of living true to it we choose to walk according to our carnal hearts. The gifts of grace require to be duly used as much as do the gifts of nature. If we misuse or neglect them, the mischief becomes proportionate to the dignity and value of that which is misused. Nevertheless our privilege is unspeakably great, to possess the mind of Christ, to belong to the Body of which He is the Head, and therein to share in that wisdom wherewith His Body is replenished.

The life of faith is a life of real submission to the guidance of Christ, so that our will may be

identified with His. How we ought to cherish such identity! The human wisdom of Christ, perfect with the unerring fellowship of the Divine wisdom, is that whereby we are to serve God and co-operate with His providential arrangements for our sanctification.

O when we think that Jesus, our loving master, is seated at the Right Hand of power and contemplates with the triumphant joy of His human heart all the vicissitudes which are apt to make us mournful upon earth, how we learn to cast aside our complaints and fears!

Amidst our difficulties the spirit of counsel is given to us from Him the Anointed Counsellor as being members of His Body. When we feel our union, spiritual, moral, intellectual, with Him at the Right Hand of God, we learn indeed to cry out, 'Thou shalt guide me with Thy counsel, and after that receive me with glory' (Ps. lxxiii. 24).

The Holy Spirit does not come to us as a Counsellor to take the place of Christ, but to bring home to us that which Christ Himself is teaching. He brings our minds upon earth into living fellowship with the glorified mind of Christ. Christ is the Angel of the Lord who spake with the fathers out of the cloud. By reason of Israel's sin, His presence was withdrawn. That presence is restored and perfected in the dispensation of the last days. The prophet asks, 'Why dost thou cry aloud? Is there no king in thee? is thy Counsellor perished?' (Mic. iv. 9). Nay; 'from Bethlehem shall He come forth who is to be ruler in Israel' (v. 2), and He shall dwell in

the hearts of His people so that they shall be all 'taught of God' (Is. liv. 13).

O Jesu, always let me abide in Thy guidance. Let me ever look to Thee, that Thou mayest guide me with Thine eye.

O My son, look to Me. My word shall be a light unto thy feet and a lantern unto thy path. Thou hast to walk amidst much darkness upon the earth. No power of earth can remove the darkness. Look to me and walk in My light, so shalt thou go securely.

Yea, Lord, Thou truly art my light and my salvation; a light not visible without, but making perfect clearness of vision within.

O My son, let thine eye be single, so shall My light guide thee securely.

Purge the eye of my soul, dear Lord, by the power of Thy Holy Spirit, so that I may indeed be able to see clearly the things that are made known to me of Thee.

Follow me, bearing thy cross. Thou wilt find that the discipline of the cross purifies the eye of the soul, and thou shalt find Mine illuminating grace shine out when the lamp of thy nature is purified for it.

O Lord, I have sought the vows of Religion in order that I may be purified from all which should cloud Thy manifestation. Help me to live true to those vows and to attain this vision.

Persevere, My son, in spite of much darkness. I will be thine everlasting light if thou

wilt patiently abide **My** counsel, and accept **My** reproof, and wait upon **My** appointments, and listen to **My** calls.

Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth. My only desire is to accomplish Thy will. Thou wilt order all for good to those who love Thee and listen to the voice of Thy words.

MEDITATION XXVII.

The Mighty God.

Beginning from Moses and from all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.—St. Luke xxiv. 27.

1. EMMANUEL.

THE Virgin's Son was to bear the name Emmanuel. The union of the two natures which this word implies constitutes the reality of the wonder from which He is designated in the present series of names. The union of the two natures, God and man, the Uncreated and the creature, involves manifold contradictions in the same Person, for that which is suitable to Him in one nature is unsuitable to Him in the other. His Divine Person baffles all the schemes of His enemies. He is God. His human weakness exposes Him in seeming helplessness to their assaults. He is Man. 'Take counsel together and it shall come to nought' exclaims the prophet (Is. viii. 10). Here is a Counsellor whose wisdom is from above. Our Counsellor is 'God-with-us.' The overflowings of the enemy may reach even to the neck. They may think to overpower God's chosen people. But no! The Head is none other than a Divine Person and against Him they cannot prevail. By the Psalmist this mysterious Person appeals to the Divine Nature

as His security when His enemies were increased, saying 'Thou, O Lord, art My glory and the lifter up of Mine Head' (Ps. iii. 8).

God's presence was with the people of God, watching over them until Christ came. 'Emmanuel!' might have been the watchword of the people from the beginning. So Moses said, 'What nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto them, as the Lord our God is in all things that we call upon Him for?' (Deut. iv. 7). They might boldly defy their enemies with this cry, 'God is with us' (Is. viii. 12). But this general presence implies an individual centre whether of promise or of origin. If the words were to be true as a watchword of expectation, they must at length find their reality in a Person who should be both God and man.

Emmanuel therefore designates a Person who is not merely lifted up by God into a condition higher than himself. It designates a Person who has a natural right to the Divine glory. One who has received this Name by inheritance, being born of the flesh in time, but begotten of God from everlasting.

O Jesu, Thou art Thyself the sign which the Father hath given us, in the height above ruling by Thy Divine nature, and in the depth below being formed in the heart of the earth as the Child of the human race. Thou art alone the sovereign over all Thy creatures, and all must bow to Thee.

Yea, My son, I have come into thy weakness with the strength of God, that I may be a sign which shall be spoken against. The evil

heart of man seeks such signs as fit the natural reason of man, but the sign which God gives is a sign which those alone will recognise whose eyes are opened to the mysteries of God.

O my Lord, open Thou mine eyes that I may see the wonderful things of Thy law which are fulfilled in Thyself. Blessed be Thy Name who only doest wondrous things. That which Thou doest is but the manifestation of the wonder that Thou art. In Thee mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other. Thou art very God and very man, co-eternal with the Father. Yet art Thou not ashamed to call us upon earth Thy brethren.

2. THE ALMIGHTY.

The name of God which belongs to Messiah is given to Him in no qualified or economical sense. He is truly God, equal to the Father as touching His Godhead, although inferior to the Father as touching His manhood.

His name is the Mighty God. This is one of the great distinctions between the true God and all that are either derivatively or falsely so called. 'The Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, a great God, a mighty and a terrible' (Deut. x. 17). To Him the children of Israel appealed in the days of Ezra, 'the great, the mighty, and the terrible God' (Neh. ix. 32). His mightiness is the cause of terror and of consolation,—terror when the presence of God is external as it was under the law, and the people 'entreated that the word might not be spoken

unto them any more' (Heb. xii. 19),—consolation when that presence is an indwelling, sustaining presence, such as was promised to Israel upon coming out of Egypt, but was held back by reason of the people's sin. That presence of Emmanuel is restored in Christ. To this the prophet points, saying, 'In that day it shall be said to Jerusalem, Fear thou not: and to Zion, Let not thine hands be slack. The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty: He will save; He will rejoice over thee with joy' (Zeph. iii. 16, 17).

His might is shown by the discomfiture of the powers of darkness. The weakness of God is stronger than men, for by God in the weakness of Calvary a victory was achieved which no human power could have effected. When He leaves this world of ours the angels, His attendants, proclaim Him in the world unseen as 'the Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle' (Ps. xxiv. 8).

Messiah emerges from the weakness which He had assumed, and stands revealed in all the glory of the Father, the Counsellor, the mighty God, or as Jeremiah phrases it, 'the God great and mighty, the Lord of hosts is His name, great in counsel and manifold in working' (Jer. xxxii. 19).

'The Spirit of counsel and might rests upon Him' (Is. xi. 2) as the Child of David, because that Spirit proceeds from Himself as the Son of God. The development of His humanity in every struggle upon earth, and every change from glory to glory, is the manifestation of the unchanging glory of God dwelling within Him.

O Jesu, Thy glorious might surpasses all our thought. Truly Thou hast a mighty arm; strong is Thy Hand and high is Thy Right Hand.

Rest, O My son, rest in My power. Fear nothing, for I am with thee, and while thou dost look up to Me there shall no power be able to do thee hurt.

O Jesu, Thou Son of David, surely Thou art the Mighty One on whom the Father has laid help that we may look to Thee for deliverance. In Thee is my trust! O cast not out my soul.

8. THE LORD OF HOSTS.

The Lord strong and mighty is the Lord of hosts. He is not mighty because these hosts attend Him. The hosts of heaven are mighty because they come forth from Him.

Messiah is that Lord of hosts whom Isaiah saw seated upon His throne. 'He was high and lifted up, and His train filled the temple' (Is. vi. 1). This glory wherein Isaiah saw Him is the glory wherein the Servant of the Lord was to be exalted after that humiliation which mankind would not believe when it was told them. The prediction of His humiliation is preceded by the statement of the glory belonging to Him. 'Behold My Servant shall deal prudently: He shall be high and lifted up and be very lofty.' So shall He be seated upon His mediatorial throne, when after His rejection by the chosen people He would 'sprinkle many nations,' calling them into the Divine covenant (Is. lii. 13, 15).

The seraphim stood above Him, for having assumed the form of man He is for a while lower than the angels. He accepts their ministrations as they fly round about Him. Nevertheless the prophet acknowledges Him as being the Lord of hosts. Even this manifestation involved an humiliation for Him who is the Lord of glory, and that humiliation was a token how He should hereafter be humbled even to the lower depths of man's estate of sorrow. That humiliation in prophetic vision was for the purpose of bringing Him within the reach of a seer who had still to confess that he 'was a man of unclean lips, and belonged to a people of unclean lips, although his eyes had thus seen the King, the Lord of hosts' (vi. 5).

The seraphim veiled their faces with their wings while they were flying around the predestined form of the Divine sovereign. The Divine mystery of the Incarnation was a wonder which even these heavenly intelligences could not penetrate. 'These things,' we are told by St. Peter, that is to say, the Incarnation, the Passion, and the Exaltation, 'the angels desire to look into' (1 Pet. i. 12).

He is the mighty God who appeared afterwards to Ezekiel. The living creatures which Ezekiel beheld were a manifestation of Him who should be priest and king. They had the face of a man and of a lion on the right side, implying the royalty wherewith the assumed humanity should act, and the face of an ox upon the left side, and the face of an eagle, implying the self-sacrificing priesthood wherewith the Son of God in our nature should intercede with the

Father—the two natures and the two offices of the promised Saviour. The living creatures are moved by the Spirit of Him who reigns upon the sapphire throne above them, who was ‘as the colour of amber, as the appearance of fire, from the appearance of His loins even upward and from the appearance of His loins even downward, as it were the appearance of fire, having brightness round about. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord.’ It was a vision in mystery of the Lord of hosts, the Word, so that ‘when they went the prophet heard the voice of their wings like the voice of great waters, like the voice of the Almighty, the voice of speech like the voice of a host’ (Ezek. i. 24), and there was a voice from the firmament that was over their heads when they stood and had let down their wings’ (Ezek. i. 24, 25). The voice which breathes through their wings in their motion is the voice of the Eternal of whom St. John speaks in a later age. ‘The Word was made flesh, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the Only-begotten of the Father’ (St. John i. 14).

When the cherubs are seen carved upon the walls of the tabernacle, only two faces are seen—the face of a man and the face of a lion: for the temple represents the Body of Christ, not His Godhead. It is therefore fitting that its symbols should portray the royal humanity. The Divine merit and glory of the priesthood which He would exercise in that temple was no fit subject for its symbolical ornamentation. The outward architecture might portray the dignity of the Body of Christ as towards man. The relation

of that Body to God was a hidden life, to be exercised behind the veil of flesh, and secret from the gaze of man.

The glory of the Lord of hosts which the prophet saw by the river Chebar, and afterwards knew to be identified with the cherubim in the vision of the polluted sanctuary, from which He withdrew (Ezek. x. 11), and to which when purged He would return ' (Ezek. xliii. 1-6), must be recognised as the glory of Messiah. He is the hope of Israel, driven away from His ancient temple by the sin of those that had the care of it, and yet He is Himself the temple which that structure symbolised. At the first Passover of His ministry He had promised that He would raise the temple up in three days, but He spake of the temple of His Body (John ii. 21). That Body when raised from the dead would be the fulfilment of what Ezekiel had foretold. ' Thus saith the Lord God, although I have cast them far off among the heathen, and although I have scattered them among the countries, yet will I be to them as a little sanctuary in the countries where they shall come ' (Ezek. xi. 16).

So shall Messiah be known as being indeed the Lord of hosts, the mighty God, the Angel of the Divine Presence, executing judgment on them that provoke Him, but gathering unto Himself such as will receive Him with penitence, and He saith ' I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you ; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them a heart of flesh, that they may walk in My statutes and keep Mine ordinances

and do them, and they shall be my people and I will be their God' (Ezek. xi. 19, 20).

O Jesu, the mighty God, Thou hast not forfeited Thine eternal glory because Thou hast taken upon Thyself our weakness. Though man reject Thee so that Thou dost forsake the ancient home of Thy covenant, nevertheless Thy word remaineth sure for ever. O be Thou my refuge, and grant that I may walk worthy of the sanctuary whereinto Thou hast called me.

My son, consider well how My prophet of old trembled at the consciousness of his own sin which the vision of My glory made him feel. How much more shouldst thou tremble, seeing thou art brought into a closer relation than was given to him. Thou dost not only behold My glory. Thou art called near to Me, that thou mayest live with My Life.

Yea, Lord, Thou hast been pleased to set upon me Thy mark that I perish not with the world of the ungodly, but Thou hast warned me that the slaughter of the rebellious is to begin at Thy sanctuary. O let Thy mark be ever manifest upon me, that my name may not be blotted out of Thy Book of Life.

My son, blessed are they that have their part in the Holy City. The name thereof shall be called, from Mine indwelling presence, The Lord is there; and if thou overcomest I will write upon thee the name of My God, and the name of the City of My God, which is New Jerusalem, and I will write upon thee My new

name. So shalt thou know Me as Emmanuel, the mighty God, the Lord of hosts, and I will claim thee as My dwelling place wherein I will abide for ever.

O Lord Jesu, Holy and Mighty, Holy and Immortal, the Angel announced Thine Incarnation to the Blessed Virgin, saying The Lord is with Thee, and Thou ownest Thy people who are called by Thy name, to be Thy dwelling place, by the title of Thy changeless love, The Lord is there. O let me live as befits Thy sacred presence. Whatever troubles may come upon the world, Thou, O mighty God, art in the midst of Thy Church, therefore shall she not be moved; Thou shalt help her, and that right early.

MEDITATION XXVIII.

The Everlasting Father.

Beginning from Moses and from all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.—St. Luke xxiv. 27.

1. THE ETERNAL SON.

MESSIAH is the mighty God, the Son of God from everlasting. 'Unto the Son He saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever : a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of Thy kingdom' (Ps. xlv. 6, 7 ; Heb. i. 8). He who is the Father of Eternity must be Himself the Eternal. 'In the Trinity none is afore or after other.' The creature may be taken up into this Eternity to participate therein. The creature cannot communicate eternity so as to have an eternal offspring. No one can have offspring greater than himself. David has an eternal Son, but he is not the father of His Eternity. Priests in the Christian sacraments convey the gifts of eternal life, but they act not in their own persons in so doing. They act as the instruments and in the name of the eternal Head. He who gives eternal life from Himself must have it in Himself as His own true and proper possession. If the Son of God then is the Father of Eternity, it is because, 'as the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself' (S. John v. 26).

This is our Lord's argument quoted in a previous Meditation. When the Jews accused Him of blasphemy because He said He was the Son of God, He replied to them that they were predestinated to share in the Divine life, but it was impossible they could do so unless the messenger of God were indeed His proper eternal Son, for no one else could communicate to them this promised gift.

The eternity of the Divine Sonship might well then be made the foundation of the Psalter, as the Divine Psalmist has made it. 'I will preach the law, whereof the Lord hath said unto me: Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee' (Ps. ii. 7).

He is the Lord of hosts, whose glory Isaiah beheld when He saw Him high and lifted up. He therefore it is who is introduced by the prophet under the same designation, 'Thus speaks He who is high and lifted up, who inhabiteth eternity, and holy is His name, I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble and to revive the heart of the contrite ones' (Is. lvii. 15). Here we have His eternity proclaimed, and it is evidently the Servant of the Lord who is spoken of elsewhere as being high and lifted up, for although God is present everywhere by His omnipresence, yet God does not by nature dwell in the hearts of the humble to give them life. This condescension of the Divine agent implies the humiliation of the Incarnate life. It is not that the humble spirit or the contrite heart are revived by refreshing influences only from without. Christ Himself becomes their life, gives them

a new life, whereas they were previously in a state of death. The eternal Sonship is the foundation of this paternity.

Hence this is the foundation, the rock, upon which our Lord builds His Church, the truth that Christ is the Son of the living God (Matt. xvi. 16), and if we realise this we shall say to Him as St. Peter did, 'Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that Thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God' (John vi. 68, 69).

Habakkuk saw Christ coming from Teman (iii. 8). That vision is not of God in abstract majesty, but of the Incarnate God. 'His glory covered the heavens, and' by reason of the Incarnation, 'the earth' which otherwise could not have known Him, 'was full of His praise.' 'And His brightness was as the light; He had horns coming out of His Hand, and there was the hiding of His power.' He comes as if from Edom marching upon the steps of the ancient law, Himself the fulfiller thereof, Himself the lawgiver with whom Moses spake, Himself now speaking in Moses' stead giving a new law from the Cross. 'He stood and measured the earth: He beheld and drave asunder the nations,¹ and the everlasting mountains were scattered, the hills of the incomprehensible eternity did bow. His ways are in the incomprehensible eternity.'

He comes then from the eternity that is incomprehensible to man, and He hides His glory in the humiliation of the Cross, but He does not cease to be

¹ See Note A, at end of Meditation.

the Eternal because He is thus hidden.' In His humiliation He is seen appealing to the Father, for the created nature is not merely assumed as a veil by the Divine nature; He takes our nature upon Him and acts, suffers, pleads, as man. So the Psalmist beholds Him asking life for Himself, as the Apostles might also have seen Him in Gethsemane praying that if it were possible this cup might pass from Him (St. Matt. xxvi. 39). He prayed not for the maintenance of a transitory life, but for that which should be worthy of Himself, that His created life might rise to the glory of the uncreated. This prayer was fulfilled, although His life under servile created form would cease. 'He asked life of Thee, and Thou gavest Him a long life, even for ever and ever' (Ps. xxi. 4). He desired life not because He feared to leave the world, but because He had eternal life within Himself, and His lower nature could not but desire to have its fellowship with the Divine nature perpetuated. 'He came from God and went to God' (John xiii. 3). He is the Eternal, and both as God and man His proper dwelling is in eternity.

His human acts do not pass away as the actions of mortal men. The eternity of His Person gives them an eternity of character. They live on in the glory of His eternal life. God will not suffer His holy one to see corruption, nor can any of His words or actions fall to the ground.

O Jesu, eternally begotten of the Father, Thou hast loved me with an everlasting love, yea, in the

¹ See Note B, at end of Meditation.

eternity of Thy Godhead. O teach me to love Thee with true gratitude all the days of my life. Surely every moment of my life is lost which is not given to the exercise of Thine eternal love, and every moment that is filled with Thy love is filled with Thine eternity.

My son, it is by Mine own gift to thee that thou lovest Me. Look to Me that thou mayest learn to love Me.

Lord, I know that I cannot love Thee by nature, yet even by nature I know that Thou deservest to be loved.

Thou must seek for grace to accomplish that which thou knowest. Thou art changeable. Thou must lose thyself in Me, for I am the Eternal. All that is outside of Me perisheth. As I abide in the Father of whom I am begotten in the fellowship of His eternity by the power of the Holy Ghost, so must thou abide in Me by the power of the same Spirit, for thou hast been called near to abide as partaker of My grace.

O Lord, evermore let me abide in Thee. Only while I contemplate Thee abiding with the Father can I know what it is to live unto God in that love which alone is life.

2. ETERNAL LIFE.

Eternity is not an abstraction in which God lives. God lives in Himself and is eternal. Nothing makes Him to be eternal. Time is the relation of finite

things one to another as they pass through various changes. Eternity is the changeless relation of the Divine Persons. Created things are not eternal simply by their unendingness, although it is only in this aspect of unendingness that we can conceive of eternity. They are made eternal by being taken up into the Divine life, whether as the objects of the Divine love or of the Divine hatred.

Doubtless even evanescent creations have a certain relationship to principles of eternal beauty wherein God delights. Science delights to investigate and register the evolutions of the created world. The longest series of such evolutions is terminable, and is but as the object of a moment. Nevertheless the Word of God which gave it existence at the beginning and ordered the successive stages of its development is eternal, and thus we may conceive that all the transient phenomena of time possess a substantive reality underlying them. The law which regulates them will be found in the end to be an eternal utterance which at the last shall rise out of this transitional phase of manifestations, and shall become a universe fixed in its eternal fitness for the indwelling of the word of God. So may we conceive of that 'new heavens and new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness.'

The world of nature was made subject to vanity, not by its own faulty choice rejecting the word of God, but by reason of Him who hath subjected the same in hope (Rom. viii. 20). That which had the power of choice becomes the object of Divine love or Divine hate, in proportion as it exerts that power of

choice conformably to the word of God by which it was created. The relation of that which has chosen or rejected God's word to God Himself is a relation which must be eternal. Thus are the creatures brought to share in eternal life or to find eternal death. Their eternity is not a state of being in which they find themselves accidentally placed. It is a relation to God in which they exist as being dependent upon Him. Eternal life is the joy of finding eternal satisfaction in God. Eternal death is the incapacity of finding any satisfaction for their nature because they have rejected God who was Himself by His Word the author and the only end of their creation. God cannot adapt His word so as to satisfy their distorted being. That would be to deny Himself. It is impossible for them to accept God, because they have rejected the law of the Divine word by which they might have become conformed to Him. 'The law of the Lord is an undefiled law, converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, and giveth wisdom unto the simple' (Ps. xix. 7).

As God is the only Eternal, so that which has eternal life is taken into a real relationship of active power with Him. This is expressed in Holy Scripture by 'the Name of God.' That which lives is taken into God's name, and acts in the fellowship of those eternal relationships which exist in the triune majesty.

'Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved' (Joel ii. 32). That name is a name of power. The name of false gods is a delusive security, for they have no eternal existence of power. The

name of God is a living reality, so that those who act in its strength are taken up in the spiritual power of the Divine life. This spiritual participation in the eternal relationships of the Blessed Trinity within itself is what constitutes the gift of regeneration to Christians, for they are made partakers of it in the most perfect manner, being baptised into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost (Matt. xxviii. 19).

The security of eternal life is described by the prophet. 'All people will walk everyone in the name of his god, and we will walk in the name of the Lord our God for ever and ever' (Mic. iv. 5). This name, this life, is eternal. Eternal life is not an external gift alongside of God. It exists only as a Divine consciousness. We are made partakers of it by being taken up so as to rejoice in God's eternal love.

'For ever and ever is literally for ever and yet, or, more strictly still, for that which is hidden and yet, which is the utmost thought of eternity we can come to. Time indeed has no relation to eternity; for time, being God's creature, is finite: eternity, being the mode of the existence of God, is infinite. Still, practically to us, our nearest conception of eternity is existence, on, and on, and on, an endless, unchanging, ever-prolonged future, lost in distance and hidden from us, and then, and yet, an ever-to-come yet, which shall never come to an end.' (Dr. Pusey on Mic. iv. 5).

We speak in poetic exaggeration and mystical sentiment of the everlasting hills, meaning merely

to contrast their comparative changelessness with the flux of nature round about them.

The phrase of 'hiddenly eternal' seems to be sometimes used in somewhat the same way in Holy Scripture, although probably always with some reference to that which is truly eternal. It does not seem that the other part of the phrase, the *and yet*, is ever used without immediate reference to what is truly and livingly eternal. When a Prince is spoken of as reigning for ever (Prov. xxix. 14), this is no exaggeration, but simply a prediction of the eternal throne of Christ. It expresses that eternal future which is ever present to those who are in Christ. Messiah is the Father of Eternity, for He stands in a relationship that never can cease to those whose changeless consciousness of life is a participation of his own.

This promise of eternal life is fulfilled in Christ. He is indeed the Father of eternity to us, as no one but the Eternal Son could be. 'This is the record, that God hath given unto us eternal life, and this life is in His Son' (1 John v. 11).

O Jesu, to know Thee truly is eternal life. Shine Thou within my soul, filling me with a constant hope in Thine own self. In Thee let me ever hope, because in Thee no promise can ever fail. Eternally do I long for Thee, not because I have Thee not, but because I have Thee, and it were death to lose Thee.

My son, I will be thine everlasting portion. The more truly thou possessest Me, the more

intensely must thou long for Me. The living hope whereby I bind My loved ones to Myself is not the desire of that which is possible, but the confident delight and joy of that which never fails.

O Lord Jesu, be Thou my portion for ever. I will keep Thy law. Never let me swerve from Thee. To lose Thee is to lose my all.

Sold fast the Cross which I give thee firm till death. So shalt thou find in Me thine everlasting life.

O Jesu, unspeakably blessed are the difficulties which call me to any effort that I may retain Thee. The communications of Thy Divine sweetness surpass all possible expectation for them that retain Thee, suffer for Thee, die in Thee. The vastness of Thy love takes me altogether out of my own power that I may live in Thee eternally.

8. THE FATHERHOOD OF CHRIST.

Christ, 'the Son of God, learned obedience by the things which He suffered, and, being made perfect, He became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him' (Heb. v. 8, 9). So speaks St. Paul, and thus expresses what Isaiah had foretold, that Christ should be the Father of eternal life. St. John declares the same respecting our Lord Jesus Christ. He is 'full of grace and truth, and of His fulness have all we received, and grace for grace' (John i. 14, 16).

Messiah was not to be a mere Reformer. He was to become the Parent of a new dispensation.

All that was done in the temple was only symbolical of what He would do in a much more glorious manner. The temple was itself the symbol of His humanity. That humanity becomes the better Eve, the mother of us all, the heavenly Jerusalem. The Shechinah within the temple was the wondrous manifestation of His personal glory, who is the very and eternal God, the Lord our righteousness, the Father of our eternal life, fructifying with Divine power the manhood which He assumes.

Admission to this temple is indeed a new birth, and from age to age all must be born again, admitted into the fellowship of this Divine life, if they are to see the kingdom of God, or know the glory of His Christ (John iii. 3).

Thus was the Son of Man to be also the Father of a new race, having indeed no mortal offspring, for He would give Himself a virgin oblation unto the Father, but having an offspring which the power of the Holy Spirit proceeding from Himself gathers into the eternal life wherein His Body is glorified, and wherein they are glorified who become the members of His Body. 'As many as receive Him, to them gives He power to become the sons of God, even to them which believe in His name, which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God' (John i. 12, 18).

Thus was to be fulfilled in Him the prophecy of Isaiah. The Servant of the Lord, despised and rejected of men, was to be high and lifted up, seated on the Right Hand of God. He should sprinkle many nations in the glory of the covenant of new birth.

It was through death that He must pass to this His glory as the Father of the new race. 'When thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see a seed, and attain length of days,' and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand' (Is. liii. 10).

Thus shall be fulfilled the expectation which David utters in his thankfulness. 'Great prosperity giveth He unto His King, and sheweth mercy unto David His Messiah, and to his seed for evermore' (Ps. xviii. 50; 2 Sam. xxii. 51). Such was the Divine promise, 'I will set up His seed for eternity, and His throne as the days of heaven. His seed shall be for ever, and His throne as the sun before Me' (Ps. lxxxix. 29, 36).

So is Christ the Father of Eternity, and 'as by man came death, by man is come to us the resurrection of the dead; for as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive' (1 Cor. xv. 22). All the children of the first Adam inherit death from their sinful parent. All the children of Messiah inherit the kingdom of heaven and eternal life from Him, the Son of the living God.

O Jesu, make me to be numbered with Thy saints in the glory everlasting.

My son, he that liveth and believeth in Me shall never die.

O Thou true Bread from Heaven, who art come down to us that Thou mayest give life unto the world, strengthen me in Thine own self that I may

¹ See Note C, at end of Meditation.

evermore rejoice in Thy presence and glorify Thy name.

My son, thou canst retain thy life only by abiding in Me. Feed then upon Me with diligence and faith: so shalt thou be nourished. This eternal life I have given thee from Myself, and in Myself thou must find its security. My flesh is meat indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. Live true to Me, and thou shalt live for ever in Me.

O gracious Lord, Thou art the king of Israel. Thou hast taken upon Thyself our nature to fulfil the promises made unto the fathers. Thou hast not disdained the form of a servant, being Thyself the Seed to whom the promises were made. But, Lord, Thou givest unto us the glory of God, and instead of Thy fathers Thou hast children whom Thou makest to be princes in all lands. Yea, Thou hast given unto Thy people a glorious inheritance, and we will ever glorify Thy holy name. Thou art our Father, the Lord from heaven, O let our hearts be evermore detached from the earth, since Thou hast purchased us unto Thyself to live in the fellowship of Thy Spirit. O draw us unto Thyself with the cords of natural tenderness quickened by Thy grace, that we may rejoice in the light of Thy countenance and praise Thee evermore with joyful lips.

NOTE A, page 314.

Surely the vision is of the Lord descending with His mighty retinue, so that the hills of heaven are as it were the chariot of their approach. The Psalmist says 'I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh even from the Lord, who hath made heaven and earth' (Ps. cxxvi. 1, 2). So here the Lord descends along with the everlasting hills, whereon He sits enthroned above the firmament. 'The everlasting mountains were scattered, spread abroad,' as Saul bade his messengers 'scatter themselves among the people' (1 Sam. xiv. 34). The lofty clouds are to our imagination a symbol in outward nature of the glory of the Divine dwelling. This phrase is therefore almost identical with that which Job says, 'He scattereth His bright cloud' (Job xxxvii. 11). 'By what way is the light parted, the east wind scattered upon the earth?' (Job xxxviii. 24). As these objects of nature symbolise the coming of God with the clouds of heaven, so the spiritual truth is expressed by Zechariah (i. 17.) 'My cities through prosperity shall yet be scattered.'

NOTE B, page 314.

It does not seem that the Being manifested in this vision was, as some would interpret the words, dark with excessive light, hidden in His own glory. The form of man was visible. The mention of the hands is inconsistent with the idea that all form was lost in the excessive brilliancy. The form of the manhood had a glory shining behind its outstretched arms which it hid from sight, although its radiant horns stretched forth in majesty on either side.

NOTE C, page 323.

The phrase 'length of days' occurs eight times, I believe, in Holy Scripture. When Job says 'length of days is understanding' (xii. 12), he apparently loses the thought of the experience of aged men in the greater thought of the true wisdom of the Eternal, for he goes on to speak of Him without

indicating any transition. He identifies the length of days with Him to whom alone belongs Eternity and who alone possesses understanding (Ps. xxi. 4). 'He asked life of Thee, and Thou gavest it Him, even length of days for ever and ever.' This was the fulfilment of the prayer in Gethsemane that the cup of the Passion might pass away from Him. The decade of Psalms beginning with Ps. xx. may be noticed as a special series having reference to Messiah the King in a beautiful sequence which closes with Ps. xxix. The flock of the Good Shepherd of Israel 'dwell in His house to length of days' (Ps. xxiii. 6). To Messiah is made the promise, when He conquers death and treads upon the lion and the adder, 'I will be with Him in trouble, I will deliver Him and bring Him to honour; With length of days will I satisfy Him, and show Him My salvation' (Ps. xci. 15, 16). Length of days seems, therefore, in Scriptural language to symbolise Christ's mediatorial kingdom. 'Holiness becometh Thine house, O Lord, for length of days' (Ps. xciii. 5). 'Keep my commandments,' says the son of David, for length of days and years of life (true life, not merely natural existence) 'and peace shall they add to thee' (Prov. iii. 2). 'Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end' (Is. ix. 7). God calls the Incarnate Conqueror to sit on His Right Hand; and so it is said of Wisdom 'length of days is in her right hand' (Prov. iii. 16), for she is seated in the eternity of God. While this phrase thus serves especially to express the glory of the mediatorial kingdom, it occurs once again in Holy Scripture, and that is to express a wail of sorrow which lasts until that kingdom is consummated. It is the wail of outcast Israel waiting for God to call them back, when their restoration to Messiah's favour shall indeed be as life from the dead. They seem to take up the cry of Messiah from the Cross. Then He cried, 'Why hast Thou forsaken Me?' (Ps. xxii. 1.) During the ages of their rejection they must cry, 'Wherefore dost Thou forget us to perpetuity and hast forsaken us for length of days? Turn Thou us unto Thee, O Lord, and we shall be turned; renew our days as of old' (Lam. v. 20, 21).

Eight is in Holy Scripture the number of renewal and regeneration. How fitting, therefore, is this expression for the eighth and last time in which the phrase 'length of days' occurs. On the third day Messiah rose from the dead. Let us hope that the dawn of the third millennium may see the length of days consummated by the renewal of Israel in the life of Christ. Yea we may hope that the days may be shortened, so that that dawn may cheer the second millennium of Christ's mediatorial kingdom ere it pass into the eternity which follows.

MEDITATION XXIX.

The Prince of Peace.

Beginning from Moses and from all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.—St. Luke xxiv. 27.

1. PEACE THE GIFT OF GOD.

WE now come to the crowning glory of the name which the coming Messiah was to bear. He is the Prince of Peace.

This is the fulfilment of the Levitical benediction, 'The Lord lift up the light of His countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.' Peace is the gift of God, the light which radiates from His countenance.

In the Levitical benediction we are to recognise the Son of God as being intended by the words, Face or Countenance of the Lord. The Hebrew text has only one word for these English synonyms, and indeed the force of the benediction is somewhat marred in the version by using two words, for the same Divine verity is intended in both clauses of the benediction. God is manifest to us in the face or person of Christ (2 Cor. iv. 6), from whom the Spirit of Peace proceeds to illuminate the faithful with His indwelling presence.

That which the Aaronic priesthood invoked is given in all its fulness under the dispensation of the

gospel. The coming of Christ as the fulfilment of the law is the final gift of that peace, to which the law was always pointing onward during its period of struggle. The law could not give Peace, but Messiah would bring it.

The highest offerings of the temple were the peace-offerings, the offerings of a sweet savour, which showed the offerer to be at peace with God. They were the type of Him that was to come, whose coming was to be the glory of the second temple, as changing their empty symbols into grace and truth. 'The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the Lord of hosts, and in this place will I give Peace, saith the Lord of hosts' (Hag. ii. 9).

The presence of Emmanuel was the strength of Gideon in his strife with the Midianites, and that strife is chosen as being especially symbolical of the victory of Messiah. The prophet Isaiah appeals to the day of Midian when announcing the birth of the Child to whom belong the three names of glory which we have now been considering (Is. ix. 4). The Angel said to him, 'Surely I will be with thee' (Jud. vi. 16). This was his pledge of victory. 'And the Lord said unto Him, Peace be unto thee; fear not; thou shalt not die.' These words are an anticipation of the Easter salutation given to the Apostles. It is the same Person of the Son of God who spake under the form of the Angel, and in the risen Body of Christ. 'And He said unto them, Peace be unto you' (John xx. 19). 'Then Gideon called the name of the altar which he built, Jehovah-shalom, which signifies The Lord is Peace' (Jud. vi. 24).

God's presence is the warrant of peace even amidst the difficulties of external war. He gives peace, victory, power to them that look to Him. Peace is not the mere absence of hostility. Peace is that victory over enemies which God gives, not the transitory calm which arises from human superiority, but the abundance of peace which the resistance of men serves only to enhance. This is that peace in the very midst of war for which we pray. 'Give peace in our time, O Lord. Because there is none other that fighteth for us, but only Thou, O God.' So was Gideon charged to enter on the conflict. The followers of Messiah press onward with the same great confidence, having for their holy watchword Jehovah-shalom. So our Lord spake to His Apostles, 'These things have I spoken unto you that in Me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world' (John xvi. 38).

Such was the gift of God announced by the prophets. The covenant of peace was made with Phinehas, because of his zeal for the Lord, even the covenant of an everlasting priesthood (Num. xxv. 12). The ministry of the temple was to pass away, but a great multitude of the priests in the early days of the Christian Church became obedient unto the faith, and thus we may see how they passed on from the ministry of the letter to that of the Spirit (Num. xxv. 12, 13). 'The Lord hath pleasure in the peace of His servants' (Ps. xxxv. 27). 'He maketh peace in thy borders, and filleth thee with the flour of wheat' (Ps. cxlvii. 14).

O Jesu, Thou hast made peace for us with God that we may live in the fellowship of the Divine love. Grant that I may never allow myself to be at peace with anything that is hateful to Thee.

O My son, the peace which I give comes with a joy which no other object can equal. Thou must rise up to the Father with a true love so that thou mayest experience this joy; then shall this peace be thine for evermore.

Surely this peace is only to be known whilst living in the very life of God from whom it comes.

Yea, My son, none can be at peace with God save as they participate in the uncreated, the eternal life. The creatures which are not formed to know this life of Divine love cannot know the joy of this Divine peace.

Surely the peace which Thou givest is even as the river of the water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God, where Thou, the Lamb of God, art placed in triumph as our all-prevailing Mediator. Now hast Thou poured out Thy Spirit upon us from on high, so that the wilderness of the Gentiles has become a fruitful field. O let the work of righteousness be peace amongst us. Yea! Lord, though Jerusalem knew not the things which belonged to her peace when Thou didst visit her of old, grant that Thy people now may learn the way of peace. O suffer them not any longer to be as the forest, for they were the chosen vineyard of Thy special care. O bring them to dwell in the peaceable habitations of Thy grace. Gather Jew and Gentile into the unity of the perfect man, and so make peace.

2. THE CONSUMMATION OF RIGHTEOUSNESS IN PEACE.

The peace which God gives can never lead to any indifference as to holiness whereby God is to be glorified. It is itself expressly said to be the work of righteousness (Is. xxxii. 17). The ungodly heart desires to find for itself a peace which will leave it undisturbed in its own selfishness ; but not such is the peace which the love of God brings.

This true peace is the effect of God's Spirit, working in the heart (Is. xxxii. 15) and transforming the life so that it becomes actively correspondent with the Divine will. Such peace is the very bond of the Divine life. It is none other than the unity of the Spirit which constitutes the life of God, and binds to Him those whom He calls unto Himself. To fail of the activity of the Divine life is to forfeit this peace altogether. It raises the soul out of her natural sluggishness, and she is found to act in perfect harmony with the Divine will, not because she fears the Divine displeasure as if God would punish her for her unfaithfulness, but because in failing of such active correspondence with God, she inflicts punishment upon herself. If she forfeits the Divine co-operation, she puts herself outside of the glory of God. Then that power becomes her destruction which should have been operative within her as her strength and joy.

It is thus by actively rising up 'to the righteousness of faith that we have peace with God.' The

promise of a power of righteousness which should exceed all that was possible under the law was a promise of peace such as the law could not know. To this the Psalmist was looking forward when he sang, 'Surely His salvation is nigh them that fear Him, that glory may dwell in our land. Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other. Truth shall flourish out of the earth, and righteousness hath looked down from heaven' (Ps. lxxxv. 9-11). He describes the up-growth of Messiah. Messiah is the Branch of Righteousness growing out of the earth to satisfy God's truth and win His mercy. The Divine peace welcomes none into its embrace of love who do not rise to meet the welcome in the power of the Divine righteousness communicated to man by the Incarnation of the Only-begotten.

The wicked look for such peace as will make them secure against God's justice, but 'there is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked' (Is. lvii. 21). Joyfully the prophet sings, 'Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee, because he trusteth in Thee' (Is. xxvi. 8), and they to whom this benediction belongs are 'the righteous nation which keepeth the truth' (Is. xxvi. 21).

O Jesu, who hast made known to us the righteousness of God in that God giveth righteousness to all that believe in Thee, grant me so to believe in Thee that I may always act in the power of Thy love.

My son, I make peace and create evil. The peace which I make is the communication of

My uncreated life, and the evil which I find in the creature is there because the creature has fallen away from Me, the uncreated life, in whom alone he could find peace and holiness.

O Lord, grant that I may evermore abide in Thee, and triumph over every temptation in the strength which Thy peace imparts.

3. THE PRINCIPALITY OF PEACE.

Messiah is no abstract idea. He is a Person. He is the Prince of Peace. The peace which belongs to Him is no mere accident of His kingdom, however nobly typified by the peaceful glory of Solomon's widespread realm. The peace of His kingdom is a power of life inherent in Himself. Indeed He is a conqueror who has known a struggle such as no earthly potentate can match. 'He is the Lord strong and mighty, even the Lord mighty in battle' (Ps. xxiv. 8).

The hosts of heaven wage their war under His supreme command, and wait for Him to come near and rebuke Satan (Zech. iii. 2). He Himself comes upon the earth to do battle with the powers of darkness, and His own arm brings salvation (Is. lxiii. 5).

When Joshua was entering the land of promise, the prince or captain of the Lord's host appeared to him (Josh. v. 14). Probably this was St. Michael, the prince or guardian of the Jewish nation (Dan. x. 21), who contended with Satan about the body of Moses (Jude 9). Other princes in heaven had special charge over other countries, as Persia and

Grecia (Dan. x. 20). But Messiah is the Prince of princes (Dan. viii. 25).

Those princes of the hosts of God carry out the war in heaven against the powers of darkness. When the Prince of princes intervenes, He maketh war to cease. His victory is not like the battle of the warrior with confused noise and garments rolled in blood, but as the outburst of light in the day of Midian. So by His mere appearance shall He put His enemy to flight, and that enemy 'shall be broken without hands' (Dan. viii. 25).

It would seem from the words of the prophet that the enemy who is thus to be destroyed by His appearing will himself have claimed to be a prince of peace. 'Through his policy he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand, and he shall magnify himself in his heart, and by peace shall destroy many' (Dan. viii. 25). This false peace will be a mimicry of Messiah's peaceful sway, and the Christian Scriptures develop the idea of plausible goodness which will characterise 'the lawless one whom the Lord shall consume with the Spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming' (1 Thess. ii. 8). Nevertheless the Prince of Peace shall entirely destroy him.

Christ is thus the impersonation of Divine peace, not as an idea, but as a power. The peace of God is as a light which shines from his face, and in Him the Levitical blessing finds its complete and literal fulfilment.

As peace with God is no created relationship, but a real participation of Divine life, the gift of God,

it is impossible that any should enter into this peace unless there be a Divine Mediator in whom we may rise to partake of the uncreated life. The Child then who is born unto us may well have this for His chiefest and most glorious title, the Prince of Peace, for hereby He shows Himself to be the Son of God.

If that be true which Christ Himself says, 'Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the sons of God' (Matt. v. 9), in a much deeper sense is it true that He who maketh peace between God and man is the very and eternal Son of God. The subordinate ministrations of peace in every form, both moral and sacramental, are but the exercise of a subordinate sonship, whereas the fundamental provision of peace is the exercise of the fundamental Sonship of the Only-begotten, and on this alone can the subordinate sonship of all His people be based.

The Prince of princes is the Prince of Peace. Others conquer by might. He conquers, as man, by endurance; triumphs over His enemies by the death upon the Cross. He conquers as God by the simple power of the Holy Ghost. 'Not by power, nor by might, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts' (Zech. iv. 6).

So when Micah prophesies of the birth of Messiah at Bethlehem, he says, 'This one shall be Peace' (v. 5), for peace is absolutely centred in Him. He is the true Jehovah-shalom, who with His Cross, as the angel with the end of His staff, toucheth the offerings which His people make to God. He causeth the fire of the Holy Ghost to come out of the rock *which is the symbol of Himself*. Thus shall their

gifts be consumed and ascend acceptably to God (Jud. vi. 21).

He is a High Priest after the order of Melchisedec, reigning at Salem, and Salem has her name because He reigns therein. Jerusalem is the home and vision of peace, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the light thereof. The light of His countenance is what makes peace. The Divine Spirit, as the bond of peace, spreads through the whole city as an organising principle of holy life. All that dwell in this city have their life from Him, the Everlasting Father. Thus is that fulfilled under His sway of which Isaiah speaks, 'I will make thine officers peace, and thine exactors righteousness' (Is. lx. 17). 'All thy children shall be taught of God, and great shall be the peace of Thy children' (Is. liv. 19).

So shall Messiah's struggle issue in a victory that shall know no end. For the struggle He hides Himself beneath the veil of suffering flesh. The victory is the manifestation of Himself in the eternity of His glorious Godhead. 'Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon His kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever' (Is. ix. 7).

O Jesu, peace shall ever be within Thy walls and plenteousness within Thy palaces. Nevertheless Thou hast caused Thy people to be born upon the earth as men of strife. O hasten the time that Thy peace may be known in all its fulness.

My son, I suffered ere I entered into My rest. Count it not then a hard thing that thou also hast for awhile to suffer. My rest shall be thine.

O Lord, my soul is cheered already by the bright vision of the river of Divine peace which maketh glad the city of God. When my heart is drooping within me by reason of the contentions which are on every side, the sure hope of Thy government and of Thy peace makes me exult, and I am ready to suffer all things, looking for and hasting unto the glory of Thine appearing.

My son, I have left My peace with My Church to be thy portion. Fear not then, neither be troubled by reason of anything that thou hast to suffer in the world. As thy faith is proved, so shall thy love be perfected.

O Lord, the chastisement of our peace has been laid upon Thee. Thou hast suffered that we might be healed. As Thou hast died for me in love, bind me to Thyself in the eternal life which Thy love gives. Thou hast made peace for us by the blood of Thy Cross. Extend that peace to us by the communication of Thy life-giving blood from heaven.

O My son, be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life.

O my Lord Jesu, Thou callest me to follow Thee in the battle. Surely Thy blood as I drink thereof shall soothe me, strengthen me, refresh me. Surely as I go through the valley of the shadow of death I can fear no evil, for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff comfort me.

MEDITATION XXX.

The Lamb of God.

Beginning from Moses and from all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.—St. Luke xxiv. 27.

1. THE LAMB PROVIDED BY GOD.

ALTHOUGH the Scriptures of the Old Testament never speak of the coming Messiah by name as the Lamb of God, yet they depict Him in this character with sufficient clearness and in such a manner as to indicate much of the work which He was to do. The name must have been current amongst the Jews at the time of our Lord's resurrection. St. John the Baptist had familiarised his disciples with the phrase, so that even if people at large gave little heed to it, the disciples who were walking to Emmaus must have understood its signification. Their teacher cannot have failed to elucidate it by many references to the Old Testament, and they knew that Jesus, whom they regarded as a prophet and the Redeemer of Israel, claimed to be the 'Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world' (John i. 29).

The central thought of Messiah's sufferings in the predictions of Isaiah is this: 'He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter' (Is. liii. 7), and the first

place where the word occurs is in Isaac's question, 'Where is the lamb for a burnt offering?'¹ to which his father replied, 'My son, God will provide Himself the lamb' (Gen. xxii. 7, 8).

Abraham does not mean merely a lamb who would be accidentally brought near for that immediate occasion. The patriarch looks forward to the great sacrifice which should one day be brought, a sacrifice growing out of that oblation of his son which he was now about to make upon that chosen hill. In offering Isaac he looked forward to the offering of Jesus and shared in it. The Lamb which is here spoken of had been truly provided of God before the foundation of the world.

Abraham rejoiced to see the day of Christ, and he saw it and was glad (St. John viii. 56). The mount of vision glowed with the brightness of the sacrifice which should be offered thereon at the close of nineteen hundred years from that time, a brightness which should arise amidst thick darkness upon that mountain, but which should thence expand into an oblation glorious with all the lustre of God upon the true mount of God which that sacred hill was chosen to typify. St. John saw the Lamb stand upon Mount Zion, and with Him an hundred and forty and four thousand, having His Father's name on their foreheads. Thus indeed was Abraham's word fulfilled. In the mount of the Lord was seen the Lamb which the Father had provided (Rev. xiv. 1). 'I have set My King upon My holy hill of Zion.' So spake the royal Psalmist, and that hill

¹ See Note A, at end of Meditation.

was to be an altar-throne, whereon, as Zechariah said, a Priest should sit. But what oblation can that Priest bring? The oblation must be worthy of Himself. It therefore can be none other than Himself. No offering from the flock could be worthy of Him. He sits there offering Himself.

The words of Isaiah therefore are no mere expression of poetical sentiment. If he speaks of Messiah as being like a lamb, he is not taking a simile haphazard from the storehouse of natural imagery. He is carrying on the chain of thought to which Abraham had given utterance eleven hundred and sixty years before.

Neither was Abraham the first to show forth the truth of the Divine Lamb. Abel had brought of the firstlings of his flock.¹

So also in all the ages that followed, the lambs perpetually offered to God were witnessing continually in their peaceful oblation to the great Victim that was to come. He would win by His death a victory which their death could not win, but it was by no chance that Jesus suffered at Easter time when the lambs were just ready for the oblation. He who is the Lord of the universe ordered that the lambing season should be at that very time when the Lamb of God should be offered upon Calvary. The facts of nature and the destinies of grace harmonise in setting forth the great truth. It was in

¹ It is remarkable that the Hebrew words 'He also brought of the firstlings of his flock,' are in the Hebrew numerically = 888 which is the well-known numerical symbol of the name of Jesus.

this spring time that Messiah should be brought as a lamb to the slaughter.

The paschal lamb was to be roasted whole. This necessitated its death becoming a special type of the crucifixion. The eagerness of the Jews to have the bodies of the condemned persons removed from their crosses before the sabbath had brought into prominence the fact of the Divine injunction 'that not a bone of him should be broken' (Ex. xii. 46). David had long ago spoken in prophecy of the protecting care of God which watched over 'the Righteous One' (Ps. xxxiv. 20). The comments of David had raised into the moral glory of the Divine love the same circumstance which the paschal edict had enjoined as a ritualistic expression of the integrity of the sacrifice of the Lamb.

O Jesu, Lamb of God, as Thou barest my sins in Thine own Body on the tree, grant that I may live crucified to the world in the participation of Thine holiness.

My son, silently did I suffer, committing Myself to Him that judgeth righteously, that I might fulfil His will, being obedient even unto death.

O Lord, help me to suffer after Thine example. As Thou callest me to feed upon Thee, live Thou evermore within me.

My son, fear not to be with Me upon the cross. I have taken thy life upon Me that I might conquer death by dying, and I give My

life to thee, that when thou diest death may not conquer thee.

O Lamb of God, Thou art the Seed of the woman whom the Father promised in the beginning. Surely the discipline of our peace was upon Thee, for Thou hast learned obedience by the things which Thou hast suffered, and being made perfect Thou art become the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Thee.

My son, I have given Myself to be the propitiation for thy sins. Come unto Me that thou mayest be united with Me in the joyousness of a new life.

O Blessed Jesu, Thou art indeed that Lamb which the Father has provided from the foundation of the world, that whosoever cometh to Thee with faith to feed on Thee should not perish but should have everlasting life.

2. THE LAMB, THE SIN-BEARER.

Death necessarily implies sin. The lambs which died in sacrifice gave up their life for sins which were not their own. The worshipper confessed his sins over the head of the victim which he offered up to die in his place. So when we come to hear of the death of the Holy One of God, the prophet tells us that 'the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all' (Is. liii. 6). God provided the Lamb to be a propitiation for our sins.

The prophet tells, however, that the bearing of our sins would be no empty substitution. He would

bear them in such a way as to show the reality of God's displeasure against sin. 'We did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted' (Is. liii. 4). He would bear the burden in the participation of our weakness. He was to come 'in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, that so He might condemn sin in the flesh' (Rom. viii. 3).

The whole ceremonial of the Jewish sanctuary pointed onward to the great sin-bearer. God spoke with scorn of the very ordinances which He Himself had instituted; and why? Because he would have the people use them only with the intention with which He had instituted them. He had instituted them not as having value in themselves, but as leading onward to that oblation which had a real value in His sight. All the helpless animals as they died bore witness to one who was to come. Daniel spake plainly of Him who was 'to finish the transgression and to make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness and to seal up the vision and prophecy.' God would anoint the most Holy One for this purpose. Messiah was to be cut off, but not for Himself, and when He had put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, He would 'cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease' (Dan. ix. 24-27).

We may well believe that the great Interpreter who spake to the disciples on the first Easter day would remind them as He quoted this prophecy that not only was Messiah to die as the sin-bearer, but prophecy had determined the very year of His death.¹

¹ See Note B, at end of Meditation.

There must be seventy sevens of years from the time when Artaxerxes Longimanus gave a command to Ezra to restore and rebuild Jerusalem, and in the middle of the last of these sevens Messiah was to be cut off. He would point out to them that this passover at which their great teacher had died upon the cross was the 487th from that date. This then certainly was the time when Messiah was to die for the people. Surely His death at such a moment was the greatest evidence which could be given them of the truth of His claim to be the Redeemer of Israel.

O Jesu, Thou Lamb of God that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon me.

O My son, I have died for thy sins, and I am alive again because thy sins could not hold Me down. I am risen from the dead in all the glory of the Father that I may raise thee also to walk in holiness as partaking of My new life.

O Jesu, can it be that sins so great as mine shall all be done away by the virtue of Thy death?

My son, My son, come unto Me and fear not. Unless thy sins can destroy the Divine life whereby I have admitted thee into My covenant, they cannot hinder the integrity of the pardon which My death has obtained for thee.

O Lord Jesu, I cast myself at Thy feet in wonder at the contemplation of Thy condescension and Thy love.

Truly am I come to do the will of the Father by offering Myself a sacrifice. Bitter was the

cross, but it was *My* joy to bear it, because God had given *Me* a nature formed for obedience, and *My* obedience was perfected by death. The Lord hath not despised *My* affliction, but all the ends of the world shall remember *Me* and turn unto the Lord, and all generations as partaking of new birth through *Me* shall testify what *I* have done.

O Jesu, let not my sins hold me down since Thou hast died to set me free from them. Thine arm has conquered death. Hold Thou me up and I shall be safe. Be Thou for evermore my light and my salvation.

8. THE LAMB TRIUMPHANT.

The victims in the Jewish temple perished. They died for sin, but they could not take sin away. Therefore death had still dominion over them.

The Victim who would take sin away would rise from death because death had no claim upon Him. He would show His triumph over death more completely by dying and rising to life again than He could have done if He had never died at all. In that case we might have imagined that death would eventually vindicate his claims over the pretended Immortal. By the resurrection we see that the power of death is altogether set at nought.

Without dying He could not have taken away our sin, for death is the penalty of sin. Not merely the death of the body, rather the state of existence in the world which terminates with death, is the

penalty of sin. We are all born in a state of death by reason of sin. Christ came into this outward state of death, although as being without sin, He was evermore the Lord of life. His death was not necessary for Himself, but He could not purge us from our sins unless He took us out of this state of death in which He found us. He must die and rise again, and call us out of this world of sin and death into that new life to which He had passed on. The shedding of His blood would propitiate the Divine justice. He would 'be a Priest upon His throne,' distributing the gifts of pardoning grace with royal bounty.

The annual sacrifice of the day of atonement contained an image of this. The double offering spake of His death and of His resurrection. One goat died, and with his blood the temple was annually consecrated as a place of communion with God. The high priest had to confess the sins of the people over the head of the other goat, and that goat was to be led away so as to bear their sins away unto a land not inhabited.

This seems to signify our Lord's descent into hell, and His resurrection. He bore our sins, but not as a guilty burden, He had shared our penalty in this world of death. He rose, the firstfruits from the dead, to the throne reserved for the Son of Man. He showed Himself superior to sin, because although He died He still retained within Himself the Divine life. He triumphed over Satan by His immortality. Satan is the accuser of the brethren, and Jesus claims freedom for His people, having borne our sins upon the tree.

O Jesu, Thou hast triumphed over Satan, triumph still by the power of Thy grace over my heart.

My son, look up to Me, and I will help thee.

O Jesu, truly Thou canst save to the uttermost all who come unto God by Thee. Thou hast triumphed over Satan for me. With Thee I have died unto sin. How shall I walk any longer therein?

Though thy sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow, but if thou return to them there remains no other sacrifice to which thou canst look for deliverance.

O Blessed Jesu, Thou art my only hope. Never, never let me leave Thee. Let the blood of Thy covenant strengthen me for the fellowship of Thy glory.

NOTE A, to page 340.

Consider the symbolism of this sacrifice. The ram was 'behind him,' for the predestination of Christ as the Saviour of the world was in the eternity of God's counsel. It was caught in the thicket; that thicket is the fence of the law by which God hedged His chosen people within the enclosure of His covenanted hill-top. This was the thicket of which He afterwards spake. 'Men hew down the carved work of the visible temple like the thicket of the forest' (Ps. lxxiv. 5). The visible temple and the covenant of Judaism were to be laid waste, but they existed not for themselves. They existed for the very purpose of bringing the Lamb of God to the sacrifice. Christ was the fulfilling of the law (Matt. v. 17). So the thicket would often be cut down by many devastators, but not taken away until its purpose was fulfilled. *That thicket is now so removed that it never can grow up again.*

Its purpose is accomplished. The sin of the people has caused its removal, 'for wickedness burneth as the fire: it shall devour the briars and thorns, and shall kindle in the thicket of the forest' (Is. ix. 18). As the judgment of God went forth against Assyria and Ephraim, so must it go forth against the earthly Jerusalem now that its heavenly purpose is accomplished. 'The fruitful field' of the Lord 'shall be esteemed as a forest' (Is. xxix. 17). But this could not be until the Lamb of God had been there provided as the sacrifice.

The ram was caught by his horns. These are the symbols of Divine strength. The Lamb of God would be brought to death under the Jewish law by reason of His claim to be the Son of God.

The meaning of the horns may be elucidated from the construction of the altar. The altar had horns to which the victim was tied, and thus was symbolised the glory of the Divine Sonship which is the real principle of acceptance in every oblation. The altar itself signifies a life higher than that of earth, a Divine life. We must be raised from earth to a Divine life if our offering is to be accepted according to the Divine covenant. By the horns of the altar, God as it were, took the sacrifice unto Himself. Divine sonship binds us to God and requires us to die to the earth. The death of the Lamb of God was not averted by the Divine Life which He possessed, but it was His Divine Life which gave it value.

The Jews did not understand that their true inheritance of Isaac's blessing consisted in being bound upon the altar, dead to the earth along with him, and that Messiah when He came would bring this blessing to its completeness by dying. They thought that their Divine prerogatives were a pledge of immunity from death, but they could not alter the Divine appointment. The destiny of the nation, which was set forth in Isaac as he lay upon the altar, was to be accomplished in the person of the Lamb which God had provided.

Of Joseph it was said that 'his horns are like the horns of unicorns' (Deut. xxxiii. 17). That strength, however, was an earthly strength, it culminated in the great schis-

matical kingdom. As Joseph's blessing perished in sin, so alas! was it to be with Judah when Judah should fall away from her Divine position and assail the Son of God as with horns of unicorns, in the violence of earthly power (Ps. xxii. 21). Nevertheless the Holy One of Israel had come to them from Teman, and the secret horns of Divine Life shone out before God (Hab. iii. 4). They rejected him who was 'the horn of their salvation and their refuge' (Ps. xviii. 2). The prophet of their captivity sang beforehand the deathwail of the holy nation. 'He hath cut off in His fierce anger all the horn of Israel,'¹ all their Divine inheritance of power (Lam. ii. 3).

NOTE B, to page 344.

It may be well here to insert the principal dates which are connected with Daniel's prophecy of the Seventy Weeks preceding the death of Christ. The Seventy Weeks are divided by the prophet into sections: seven weeks, sixty-two weeks, half a week; or in years $49 + 434 + 3\frac{1}{2}$, i.e. 486½ years. The remaining $3\frac{1}{2}$ years are left for a subsequent purpose.

	B.C.
Artaxerxes Longimanus ascends the throne . . .	464
" " 7th year . . .	457

In this year he gave Ezra the commission to go up to Jerusalem and reorganise the city, 'to repair the desolations and to give the people a wall' (Ezra ix. 9).

'From the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks. The street shall be built again and the wall, even in troublous times' (Dan. ix. 25).

Through troubles little progress was made.

¹ 'The horn of Israel' = numerically 891, i.e. $9^2 \times 11$. The nine is the symbol of Divine power in its fulness. The eleven is the symbol of the sin from which by Divine power we are set free.

B.C.

Nehemiah arrives to urge the work forward . . . 44

The building of the walls is carried on with much difficulty because of the opposition of Sanballat and others.

Nehemiah's second administration was from . . . 428-420

The seven weeks (forty-nine years) of trouble close . . . 408

The sixty-two weeks begin from now, *i.e.* 434 years.

'After sixty-two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for Himself' (Dan. ix. 26).

Birth of Christ 4

Christian era 0

The sixty-two weeks (134 years) close with Christ's baptism A.D. 26

'He shall confirm the covenant with many for one week, and in the midst of the week He shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease' (Dan. ix. 27).

3½ years of Christ's ministry close with His Crucifixion . . . 30

Messiah confirmed the covenant with many during the week, and in the middle of the week He was cut off.

Destruction of Jerusalem 70

There is a remarkable Jewish tradition, that for forty years before the destruction of Jerusalem, *i.e.* from the day of atonement after the Crucifixion, what they held to be a sign of acceptance never took place. See Rosh hashanah, p. 31, in Lightfoot, Min. Templ. c. 15, *Opp.* i. 746, quoted by Pusey on *Daniel*, p. 172, and Goode's *Warburton Lect.* pp. 304-7.

MEDITATION XXXI.

Messiah.

Beginning from Moses and from all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.—St. Luke xxiv. 27.

1. THE HOLY OF HOLIES.

THE appropriation of Messiah as a personal name to designate the Seed of the woman who was expected before, is probably due to Daniel's prophecy. 'Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people, and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins [or seal up sins], and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy.' This Holy of Holies is in the next verse spoken of as Messiah the Prince.

He is called Holiness of Holinesses, because He is anointed with the Holy Ghost, as indeed He was by the subsequent fact of His resurrection declared to be 'the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness' (Rom. i. 4).

All that was connected with the worship of God according to the Mosaic ritual was typical of Messiah, and consequently all was anointed. Aaron and his sons, and afterwards the high priest, who was known

as the Anointed One (Ex. xxviii. 41 ; xxix. 7, 21 ; xxx. 30 ; xl. 13, 15 ; Lev. vi. 20 ; vii. 35 ; viii. 12, 30 ; x. 7 ; xxi. 10, 12 ; Num. xxxv. 25), and Aaron's garments (Ex. xxix. 21 ; Lev. viii. 30), and the tent of meeting (Ex. xxx. 26), and the ark of the testimony (Ex. xxx. 26), and the table and all his vessels (Ex. xxx. 27), and the candlestick and his vessels (Ex. xxx. 27), and the altar of incense (Ex. xxx. 27), and the altar of burnt-offering and all his vessels (Ex. xxix. 36, xxx. 28, xl. 9 ; Lev. viii. 11 ; Num. vii. 1, 10), and the laver and his foot (Ex. xxx. 28 ; xl. 11 ; Lev. viii. 11), and the tabernacle and all that was therein (Ex. xl. 9 ; Lev. viii. 10 ; Num. vii. 1, 10, 84, 88), and the wafers (Ex. xxix. 2).

The term Holy of Holies is applied to the oracle which is called *The Holy of Holies*, and the altar of burnt offering (Ex. xxix. 37, 40), the altar of incense (Ex. xxx. 10), and to some of the offerings (Lev. ii. 8, 10 ; vi. 17, 25, 29) ; (these might be eaten only by the priests, whereas the people might eat of those which were simply holy) ; and the shewbread (Lev. xxiv. 9), and the incense (Ex. xxx. 36), and the sacred vessels (Ex. xxx. 29), and anything devoted to the Lord (Lev. xxvii. 28). The land also which was set apart for the sanctuary in Ezekiel's vision of the restored tribes was Holy of Holies (Ezek. xlviii. 12).

The temple represented Christ in the completeness of His Body. The Oracle, or the Holy of Holies, was the central principle of sanctification, the heart as it were of the sacred edifice. So is the Sacred Humanity, as personally borne by Christ, the

principle of sanctification to the Church, His mystical Body. The things that are holy of holies are like the organs of the Body by which the life of Christ, the Heart, is sacramentally distributed throughout His members.

While the sacred Humanity is as the Heart from whence the mystical Body of Christ is formed by sacramental communications, the Divine Person of Christ must be acknowledged as the Head of the Body. In the temple the Divine Shechinah in the Oracle represented the glorious Personality of the Incarnate Word, and the ark with the mercy-seat whereon the Shechinah rested represented the Humanity which He had taken to Himself as the treasury of meritorious sanctity, while the veil represented that Humanity as hiding the Divine glory which was in Him, and the high priest represented His mediatorial action as ministering the gifts of heaven to His people.

He was the Tabernacle, the promised sanctuary (Is. viii. 14, Ezek. xi. 16), in whom all true worshippers must come to appear before God. He was the Oracle wherein the word of God was revealed. His Divine Sonship was the altar of burnt-offering, whereon the sacrifice should be lifted up, that dying to earth it might live in the glory of Divine life. It was also the altar of incense from whence the merits of His Divinity should be communicated to the oblation of His manhood, that His death might not speak of man's continuing doom, but might be fragrant with the sweetness of triumphant immortality. All the *victims* upon the altar symbolised various aspects of

His oblation. The laver and his foot told of the cleansing virtue of His Blood, wherein all should be washed who came to God through Him. The unleavened wafers which after their anointing were to be offered by Aaron on the day of his consecration may perhaps be taken with reference to the institution of the holy Eucharist. The vessels of the sanctuary are the sacramental ordinances of the Body of Christ, fragrant before God with the covenanted anointing of the Spirit of Christ.

The sacred oil for the purposes of the sanctuary was lost when the Jews were carried away to Babylon. The traditional expectation of the people was that it would be restored in the days of Messiah.

O what a restoration it was to be when the anointing power was restored! The new gift was greater than the gift before the loss. The sacred oil in the first temple was but the material symbol. He who came to be the glory of the latter House was anointed with the antitypal, the true Divine unction of the Holy Ghost. The first, typical anointing separated for Divine uses but gave no life. The true, the perfect anointing is by the Procession of the Eternal Life sanctifying for ever the Humanity which the Son of God assumed.

The Holy of Holies therefore of whose anointing Daniel speaks is He Who is partaker of the lifegiving unction, 'quickened by the Spirit' (1 Peter iii. 18).

At the close of the threescore and two weeks He was to be anointed. This anointing took place, according to the prediction, with Divine chronological accuracy at our Lord's baptism.

This anointing of the All-holy for the purposes of His ministry was an effusion of the Holy Ghost distinct from the indwelling of the sanctifying Spirit who had been all the while dwelling within Him. It was not an increase of personal fellowship with God, but an inauguration for the ministerial representation of the Father Who had sent Him, and as that effusion was with the Word of the Father speaking, so it came to the Humanity of Christ from Himself in His Divine glory as the eternal Word.

The Son of God could not receive any additional gifts at His baptism, for all that the Holy Ghost gives He receives from the Son, even as the Son receives all from the Father. It is one of the properties of God the Son, that the Holy Ghost proceeds from Him. The Person of the Incarnate would not therefore have been the true Person of God the Son, unless the Holy Ghost were proceeding from Him, and by this procession anointing the assumed Manhood. Accordingly we say in the Creed, 'He was conceived by the Holy Ghost,' for the Holy Ghost was the instrument by whom He assumed and sanctified the Body which He took of the Blessed Virgin's substance.

When, however, He took upon Himself our nature 'He emptied Himself,' being in the form of a servant, (Phil. ii. 7) so as for a time no longer to act with the Divine omnipotence which yet belonged to Him. Such action would have destroyed all human relationship between Himself and the world around Him. He acted, not in the Divinity of His personal character, but in the truth of His assumed Humanity. *He acted* therefore as one subject to the operations

of the Holy Ghost, not as the Lord from whom the Holy Ghost proceeded. Hence He as Christ is a true pattern to us as Christians, for in this strength of the Holy Ghost we are to act. Consequently He glorified not Himself to be an high priest (Heb. v. 5). He waited for the appointed mission, the ministerial unction at His Baptism, and this is the crisis to which the prophet points. Then He went forth to do God's will as the elect in whom God delighted (Is. xlii. 1). The Spirit of the Lord resting upon Him was the strength of all His ministerial and mediatorial actions.

O Jesu, the All-holy One, anointed with the Holy Ghost, grant that I may abide in Thy sanctifying grace, and act in the power of that unction which Thou callest us to share as members of Thy Body.

My son, the anointing which thou receivest of Me shall guide thee into all truth and holiness.

O let me be true to this anointing in every action ; so shall I find Thee true to me in all whereunto Thou sendest me.

Verily, My son, never will I send thee forth to any work without the security of that unction which shall enable thee to prosper in all things.

O Lord Jesu, Thou art anointed with the oil of gladness, and joyful must the life be of them that act in the power of Thy Holy Spirit.

Yea, My son, the Cross does but serve to make them more conscious of My joy fulfilled in their hearts while they follow Me.

So be it, Lord. Evermore let me praise Thy glorious Name for that which Thou hast shed forth upon me. The joys of earth pass away, but the joy of Thy holy anointing sanctifieth unto eternity. The discipline of the Cross is hard to bear, but it is full of profit, and in the very hardness of the discipline I learn to praise Thee more and more for the sweetness of Thy grace anointing my inmost soul with heavenly delight.

2. THE PURPOSE OF MESSIAH'S COMING.

Messiah was 'to finish or restrain the transgression' (Dan. ix. 24). 'God sending His Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh' (Rom. viii. 3). The true power of man to live in the full freedom of the Divine sonship was manifested in Jesus, anointed with the Holy Ghost. By the gift of the same anointing He makes His people free. The power of sin over mankind is restrained by the Holy Ghost. This is what Jesus Himself says: 'If the Son shall make you free, then are ye free indeed' (John viii. 36).

Messiah came to 'seal up sins.' 'He bare our sins in His own Body on the tree' (1 Pet. ii. 24), nailing to His Cross the accusations of the enemy. Triumphant He exposed there the book of claim which the great Adversary had written out, accusing mankind that he might hold us as his prey (Col. ii. 14; Job xxxi. 35). As He nailed it to His Cross, written there in bleeding wounds, so with Him it *was* buried, buried in the sealed sepulchre. The

Jews sealed that sepulchre powerlessly in their malice. There was a mightier seal upon the dead Body of Christ. God the Father had sealed that Body. The seal of the Spirit remained upon Him even in death, so that no corruption could touch Him. The seal of the Divine unction makes the accusations of Satan powerless against the Body of Christ. By the seal upon that Body no claim of Satan can henceforth be enforced against His members. That Humanity shall no longer bleed in death as bearing man's sin, but it shall yield the ceaseless stream of precious Blood to cleanse and regenerate mankind. The Divine Spouse in the Canticles speaks of the Humanity which the Beloved has wedded to Himself. 'A garden enclosed is my sister, my spouse; a spring shut up, a fountain sealed' (Cant. iv. 12).

The Spirit seals up our sins in the dead body of Christ. Our infirmities are transformed by His propitiation into triumphant principles of sanctifying love, so that those who come to Him with penitence and faith find a fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness. When we are sealed by Him in holy Baptism, we are 'buried with Him by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life' (Rom. vi. 4).

Messiah came 'to make atonement for iniquity.' His blood was to be sprinkled, not externally as the blood of the earthly victims, which could not take away sins, but with interior life-giving power, so as to remove the condition of death in which man found himself by his alienation from God. The glow of

Divine life comes around the soul on which the blood of Jesus is sprinkled, and its former abominable deadness passes out of sight. It is covered. It is done away.

As Messiah came to make atonement for iniquity, He came 'to bring in everlasting righteousness.' So He said to St. John at the very time when He came to be baptised, 'Thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness' (Matt. iii. 15). He comes to be a high priest after the order of Melchisedec, that the righteousness of the law may be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit of His anointing, that we may be made the righteousness of God in Him (Rom. viii. 4 ; 2 Cor. v. 21).

As He came to seal up sins so that they could no more be brought in accusation against His people, so He came 'to seal up the vision and the prophet.' The prophets and the law prophesied until John (Matt. xi. 13). Jesus sealed them to put them away, not by repudiating them but by fulfilling them. All prophets spake of Him, and although He is Himself called a prophet, yet not as one of them. He is a prophet like unto Moses. Other prophets appealed to men's consciences as violators of the law. Messiah was to institute a new law, a new covenant (Jer. xxxi. 31-33), a covenant which the very beasts of the field should recognise, a covenant of betrothal with His people which had sinned against Him (Jer. ii. 18-23). The establishment of this covenant is indeed the very seal and warrant of the covenant which preceded it, for the covenant of 'vision and prophet' was but preparatory to the covenant of Divine life and illumination

wherein everyone should be taught of God (Is. liv. 18). The promise could not fail, 'They shall all know Me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more' (Jer. xxxi. 34).

As Messiah came to restrain the transgression, so He came to make Himself known as 'a Holy of Holies,' the living reality to which every Holy of Holies in the Mosaic worship pointed onward. He came not only to be holy but to make His people holy with His own holiness. To Him the evil spirit bore witness, saying, 'I know Thee who Thou art, the Holy One of God' (Luke iv. 34). It is doubtful whether the phrase 'Holy of Holies' is ever applied in Holy Scripture to a person, although possibly Aaron may be thus designated in one place along with his sons as receiving holiness by communion with him. The phrase therefore seems to apply not to the Divine Person of the Son of God but to the Humanity which was anointed to be Holy of Holies, holy and a principle of holiness to all His offspring.

The six promises respecting Messiah find their climax in the anointing which separates His Body and Blood to be a germ of living holiness for evermore. It was not His Person which was anointed, for the unction came from Him. It was his human nature which was anointed with the Holy Ghost and with power, as the angel said to the Blessed Virgin, 'That holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God' (Luke i. 35).

Restraint of transgression, sealing of sins as pardoned, atonement for iniquity, correspond inversely

with the communication of Divine righteousness, sealing of Divine promises by the covenant of betrothal, vocation to holiness by the anointing of the Holy Ghost.

O Jesu, ever let me walk worthy of this holy covenant whereunto Thou hast called me !

It is a covenant of life wherein I would betroth thee unto Myself. Turn not aside from it, for it shall never fail.

Thou, O Blessed Jesu, art the Christ, the Son of the living God. O let Thy Spirit raise me now to live with Thee by grace. O let Thy holy anointing purge out from me whatever might keep me under the power of sin, and perfect me in holiness according to the betrothal of Thy love.

3. THE CUTTING-OFF OF MESSIAH.

In the middle of the following week Messiah was to be cut off, that is to say, three and a half years after His baptism. The prophecy is equivalent to that of Isaiah, 'He was cut off out of the land of the living' (Is. liii. 8).

'And there shall not be to Him.' The difficulty of these words perhaps arises from an intentional multiplicity of meaning. 'He is not,' as it was said of Enoch. Or 'The restored city shall not be to Him.' Although He comes when the city and the temple are restored, yet His own people dwelling therein receive Him not. 'There shall not be to Him' any welcome. Perhaps we might take the words as

echoing the predicted cry of His enemies, 'There is no salvation for Him in His God' (Ps. iii. 2). At any rate the words imply the utter destitution which was realised on Calvary.

Thus was Christ to fulfil the work which the prophet had marked out for Him. He would not triumph 'by power, nor by might, but by the Spirit of the Lord' (Zech. iv. 6) wherewith He was anointed. He was the 'Headstone that should be brought forth with shoutings, saying, Grace, grace unto it' (Zech. iv. 7), the stone which the builders refused, which was nevertheless to become the Head of the corner (Ps. cxviii. 22).

Though He was to be cut off, nevertheless He was to confirm the covenant with many for the remainder of the week. The sacrifice and the meat-offering of the temple were to cease from the moment of His cutting off, for thenceforth they became valueless. The new covenant being brought in shows that the old covenant was ready to vanish away (Jer. xxxi. 31; Heb. viii. 13).

Blessed then were they who welcomed Messiah. As for those that would not receive Him, the Romans were to take away their place and nation. The flood of desolation which overspread both the city and the sanctuary has had no parallel in all the ages of the world; but Messiah came as it was written of Him. He established a new covenant in the power of His resurrection. 'He died not for that nation only, but that also He should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad' (John

¹ See note at end of Meditation.

xi. 52). Thus it behoved Christ to suffer and to enter into His glory.

O Jesu, gather us all into the unity of Thy risen life, into the glory of Thy Divine Sonship.

My son, I have made with thee My covenant of peace. Abide with Me, and let My words abide in thee.

Yea, Lord, every nation and people that will not serve Thee shall perish. O let me serve Thee that I may live for ever. Hasten the time when those who rejected Thee shall look on Thee Whom they pierced, and mourn for Thee as one mourneth for his only son.

NOTE to p. 363.

The words 'There is no salvation for Him' are almost like the name of Messiah, for in Hebrew numerically they equal 888. He had no Saviour. So His enemies taunted Him. He needed no Saviour, who was Himself the Saviour of all. This they knew not. This numerical coincidence is all the more remarkable as it occurs in the third Psalm, which is in a sense the first, for the two first Psalms really constitute a preface to the Psalter.

MEDITATION XXXII.

Constraining Jesus to Abide.

And they drew nigh unto the village, whither they were going: and he made as though he would go further. And they constrained him, saying, Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is now far spent. And he went in to abide with them.—St. Luke xxiv. 28, 29.

1. JESUS SEEMING AS IF HE WOULD GO FURTHER.

THE companion who expounded to these two disciples many of those passages which we have now been considering, and many others also, awakened in their hearts a strong desire that He should continue to teach them. But it seemed as if His own business led him elsewhere.

So is it with us and the risen Lord. It seems as if there were many who had a claim upon Him, as if He could not limit Himself to ourselves. If we catch a glimpse of the vastness of His work we seem to feel that He must be occupied in making it known to others. We do not realise the satisfaction which He experiences in just teaching our own selves if we are indeed willing to be taught by Him.

Truly He wants us to feel this large-heartedness of purpose which belongs to Him. He does want to go further. We cannot appreciate His goodness in staying with ourselves unless we do see how He desires all men to come to the knowledge of the

truth. What is more: if He does stay with us, it is in order that He may go further. He goes further by making us to be His instruments through whom to work on others, and thus going forth along with us.

The journey of Jesus has no earthly close. He goes forth to all creation, and does not rest satisfied with creation, but goes onward to God, bringing creation along with Him. These disciples were not yet united to Him. He could not take them on. He tarries that He may make them fit to go on along with Him.

They do not in any way understand His purpose, for they do not know Himself. We must know Christ if we are to know the ways and works of Christ. How little do we understand the relation between our own growth in holiness and the advance of Christ's church in the world! Our outward occupations often seem to us a hindrance to our own sanctification. It appears as if Christ would go on, as if, while our outward nature is serving Him, our inner selves were left behind uncared for. But it is not so. He does not want to leave us, though He wants to go on. He wants us to go on along with Him—and that, not because of what He wants us to do for others, but because He wants us to attain to the life of God.

Where would He go then? He came forth from God and He was going to God. We cannot know Jesus unless we know Him thus always progressing towards the Father. This progress is the approach of filial love. By His Divine Sonship He is ever *one with the Father*. In His manhood there is the

continual approach of all the faculties which He has assumed, so that they may find an eternal satisfaction in the Divine Nature wherein they are glorified.

We are not to think of Christ's Humanity as if it now rested in the idle joy of having attained to the summit of creation. He rejoices as Man in His continued fellowship with the Father by the anointing Spirit, 'both Lord and Christ' (Acts ii. 36).

This is indeed what constitutes His perpetual intercession for us as His members. All that the Father has is given to Him, and yet He is receiving all continually, for that which He receives is not a dead substance received once for all, but a living power received by Him eternally in communion with the source from whence it comes. As He receives so He gives, distributing that eternal life to be the progressive principle of glory to His members. He Himself lives along with them. He goes forward that we may go forward and that He may be glorified in us and we in Him.

If we would retain Christ then, we must be going forward in the holy life of God along with Him. We must not let Him go so as to leave us. We must not want to stay behind as if it were enough for us to know Him as we know Him now. The best experiences of earth must not satisfy us. We must not know Jesus merely after the flesh. Our life is hid with Him in God, and we can only know Him by the exercise of Divine faculties. 'The natural man understandeth not the things of the Spirit of God, but they are foolishness unto him, because they are spiritually discerned' (1 Cor. ii. 14).

O Jesu, this heart of mine can never contain Thee. Yea! this universe of Thy creation is too small for Thee. Thou goest ever onward. O how can I have Thee ever with me!

My son, I leave thee not because I go to others. I am ever present with thee, even though thou see Me not.

O Lord, I know the wonder of Thy love, how it surpasses knowledge. Thou takest others into Thy love and makest Thy love only the more known thereby. Surely Thou wouldst have me advance in love to others according to my perception of Thy love, that so I may have Thee ever with me, losing myself in Thee.

Yea! thou must go forward in love to others if thou wouldst experience My love. If thou go forward with me in the work of My love, thou shalt attain with Me to the reward of My love, even to the glory of God the Father.

Dear Lord, thither do I desire to attain. O will Thou truly draw me on thither?

Even so, My son. I desire that thou shouldst be with Me where I am, that thou mayest behold My glory.

O how can it be that Thou shouldst desire even for me to behold Thy glory when all the host of heaven rejoice in its contemplation!

Assuredly the host of heaven satisfies not the infinity of My love! Otherwise I had not created thee. The welcome of the Father's love is that which satisfies Me, and I drink thereof

in My heart, while I make that glory to stream forth to thee.

O Lord, let me abide in Thee, and Thy words abide in me, for they are full of comfort, encouragement, holiness, and joy.

2. COMPELLING JESUS TO REMAIN.

They forced Him, saying, Abide with us. O, it was a holy violence. In such violence Jesus delights. Yea, He cannot stay with any unless they do use this violence towards Him. How often we lose Jesus by failing in this respect. 'The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force' (Matt. xi. 12).

Jesus often seems to leave us. We feel suggestions for prayer or other acts of devotion, and at the same time we feel incapable of rising up to them. There is a presence testifying of the higher life within us, and moving onward, which yet we cannot follow. That presence is the presence of Jesus moving us by His Holy Spirit while He is personally mediating on our behalf. We need at such times to detain Jesus within our souls. He makes His presence felt on purpose that we may detain Him. He cannot abide with us unless there is such compulsion on our side.

The patriarch wrestled until break of day; 'and He said, Let me go, for the day breaketh.' These disciples urged Him to remain, for it was towards evening and the day was far spent.

Those who lived before Christ came in the flesh

looked forward to His day. He needed to escape from the limits of type and figure that He might act in grace and truth. Nevertheless those who wrestled with Him under those typical manifestations won from Him the blessing.

We who are of the day need to urge His continuance with us with all the force that we can exercise, for when He leaves us it becomes night again. His presence is perpetual day, but the experiences of His grace are brief daylight followed continually by darkness because of the weakness of our nature.

The natural day does not draw to its close because the sun disappears, but because the earth turns away from his illumination. The sun seems to set, but in truth the earth revolves. So in the spiritual world. The daylight does not die. It seems to us as if Jesus were going on, and passing out of our sight. It is really we who turn from Him to the darkness. Grace shines out unchangeably. Nature fails to abide in the light thereof.

'It is towards evening.' The presence of Jesus is a supernatural light which shines out evermore if we can detain Him. It was typified by the standing still of the sun at the prayer of Joshua. There is no day like that which is prolonged by earnest prayer, detaining Jesus until we have gained the victory over our enemies. Evening naturally draws near, and the power of darkness, but Jesus is never wearied of helping them that detain Him.

'The day has turned.' This did not in that country imply any beginning of darkness. The twilight would be very brief. Alas! a very brief twilight

may bring upon our souls the complete darkness, and will do so if we yield to natural weakness and do not violently detain Jesus as our Light. No brightness of the noon warrants us in thinking that the day will be lengthened. It cannot be lengthened save by the energy of faith.

O Jesu, be Thou evermore the Light of my soul. Let me not walk in darkness. Strengthen me to detain Thee.

My son, while thou art in this world thou must expect that times of darkness will continually be coming on. Detain Me with thyself that I may be thine everlasting Light. Think not that the darkness must prevail. While thou holdest Me unto thyself the darkness cannot come near.

O Lord, darkness of many kinds presses upon me, but the Light of Thy presence can drive all away. Temptations within: difficulties, dangers, doubts all round about. I cannot meet them in the light of my own understanding, or wisdom, or power. Shine Thou evermore within me. All shall be well.

3. JESUS COMING IN TO ABIDE.

If we constrain Jesus upon the way by perseverance in devotion, Jesus will come into our house and make His abode with us. The darkness of nature is cheered by the supernatural light of His grace. O how sweet it is for the soul to know that Jesus has yielded to the loving violence with which

we constrain Him. What must have been the joy of these disciples as they entered with their captive !

Are we thankful, as we ought to be, when Jesus yields to our entreaty, and lets Himself become our captive that He may be our deliverer ?

It is to be feared that we often take his continuance with us as if it were a matter of course, repining at the temptations we feel, but not grateful when the temptations are removed. We ought to take care that we are thankful to Jesus for entering in to dwell with us.

If He does not enter in, the spirit of darkness will find our house which was cleansed for the indwelling of Jesus empty, and will return with sevenfold evil upon us. Nothing save the entrance of Jesus, the eternal Light, can keep the darkness of sin away. O joyous Light ! In Thy light we shall see light.

Jesus entered in to abide with them. And yet how soon He would disappear from them. He abides none the less. Rather He abides the more truly and powerfully. He abides with us more truly by our feeding upon Him than He would do if we could have His presence ever so near by outward manifestation and ever before our eyes in merely external companionship.

If it is a joy to us to have Jesus consenting to abide with us, we should remember that it is a joy to Him to enter in and abide. Our joy is indeed but the reflection of His joy. He rejoices that we welcome Him ; we should rejoice in Him much more if we remembered how He rejoices in us. We are too apt to feel our unworthiness as if our love could not

matter to Him, instead of thinking of His love who created us, redeemed us, and cannot be satisfied until He perfects His people for the love which He has to them.

We should learn to have our joy dependent upon His joy. For want of doing this we are very apt to treat grace as if it were merely the complement of nature, instead of recognising its Divine character by reason of its Divine origin. Many are troubled because they do not naturally rejoice in Christ, whereas none can naturally rejoice in Christ. Our joy, our love, must be a supernatural movement within the soul, and sometimes this very movement makes us all the more sensible to the reluctance of the natural spirit which is stirred by this impulse.

Sadness in ourselves will often go along with rejoicing in the Lord. Nevertheless Jesus will raise us out of our sadness in due time, and then we learn to rejoice along with Him and in Him. If He abides with us our hearts must learn to rejoice, for He is the author of all joy: 'He shall rejoice in His works' (Ps. civ. 31). So let us praise Him for the joy which He has in raising us out of our infirmities. That is the best way, indeed the only way, by which we can rise out of them. If He dwells with us there must be light in our dwelling. At evening time there shall be light, if He come into our house at evening and abide with us. He raises us out of spiritual sadness by His illuminating word, and in the hour of natural darkness, when outward sorrows close around the soul and the solace of all earthly brightness dies away, He comes to be with us and

makes us conscious, if we will only welcome Him, of the glory of the eternal Love.

O Jesu, graciously vouchsafe to come and dwell with me. O give me grace that I may truly and worthily welcome Thee with the response of grateful love.

My son, how often do I walk with thee along the way of earth's weary pilgrimage, ready to stay with thee if only thou wilt give Me a welcome, but I go on, for thou detainest Me not.

O Lord, how miserably ungrateful I am. When I think how Thou didst come down to be as a stranger upon earth in order to bind me to Thyself, surely I ought to be living in watchfulness to lay hold upon every token of Thy presence.

Yea, My son, cherish My presence in all acts of devotion, in eucharists, in Religious obligations, in thy brethren who surround thee in choir, in all whom thou meetest in the world. Behold Me, and rejoice in My love.

O Lord, Lord, open mine eyes, my heart. O fill me with the joys of Thy Divine Love, that I may love Thee as Thou lovest me.

MEDITATION XXXIII.

The Blessing of the Bread.

And it came to pass, when he had sat down with them to meat, he took the bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew him, and he vanished out of their sight.—St. Luke xxiv. 30, 31.

1. JESUS TAKING THE BREAD.

JESUS suffered Himself to be constrained as a stranger to stay with these disciples, but although He did not make Himself known to them immediately He did not purpose to withdraw without giving them the opportunity of recognition. Having come with them to their house, He cannot suffer Himself to be with them in any other relation than that which truly belongs to Him. It is not He that is their guest. They are His. He is the Lord and Master of the Feast, yes, of every feast, for all things in nature and in grace come from Him. He therefore takes to Himself without hesitation the place which belongs to Him, and as the Head of the company He gives His Blessing to the meat.

This would at once prepare the disciples to discover who their companion was. Probably also the manner of the Blessing would recall many a former occasion on which they had seen Him acting in like manner. The great teachers had their special forms

of blessing. They would know what had been their Master's use, and now they see Him once more performing the accustomed rite.

He took the bread and blessed. Although we may not understand in this the ordinary Eucharistic rite, for these two disciples not having been present at the last Supper would not have understood the ceremony had they seen it, yet it was a blessing which was akin to the prayer of consecration, and Jesus could communicate His presence how He willed.

Moreover, we are not to limit the character of this Blessing by their knowledge of it. Alas! if we were to limit the benefits of the holy Eucharist by our knowledge how sadly would they be dwarfed! They would not have understood the appointed words of consecration; but Jesus could consecrate in whatever manner He pleased, whether by uttered or unspoken word, although we cannot consecrate unless we use the words in which He has appointed us to do so. When therefore we read that He took the Bread we may well conclude that He took it to Himself in all the fulness of Eucharistic identification and not merely in the grasp of the outward hand.

He who had accompanied them in one form, by which He was held back from their sight, probably made Himself to be present now under another form under which the natural eye could not detect Him. His appearance to these two travellers shows that He can be present under varied forms, and this prepares the way for us to accept the truth of His presence now under the forms of bread and wine.

Presence is to be known not so much by appear-

ance as by power. The effect of this bread upon those who partook of it indicates that it contained the illuminative virtue of the Divine Wisdom.

‘He brake and gave to them.’ He did not merely bless so that they might take, but He gave with His own hand to them of that which he had broken. He would have them receive this Bread as a gift not merely of His creating but from His very self.

How careful ought we to be when we receive the holy Eucharist that we receive it as coming immediately from the hands of our incarnate Lord. He is the Priest who really puts this sacred gift into our hands.

Indeed the soul must be filled with a mysterious joy which recognises Jesus as being the Master of the feast, and receives the gift from Him. At Cana the governor knew not whence came the water which was made wine. Much less did he know whence came the wine. We in the holy Eucharist ought to know whence the true Bread comes. We must receive it from the hands of our Lord with adoration and thankfulness. He gave to these disciples and vanished. He who is still unseen still gives to us.

O Jesu, how little do I know Thee when I come to feast with Thee ; nevertheless Thou art ever ready to give Thyself to be our spiritual food and sustenance.

My son, thou knowest not even the laws of nature whereby thy body is preserved. Much less dost thou know the laws of grace whereby I give Myself to renew thy spiritual life unto eternitp.

O Lord, such knowledge is too wonderful and excellent for me ; I cannot attain to it. Teach me then mine own ignorance, and teach me to accept Thy words according to the greatness of Thy truth and not according to the littleness of mine own understanding.

My son, when thou comest to feed with Me, eat that I give thee. It is prophets' food. I have blessed it, not with outward form of words alone, but with inward power. All the virtue of My Passion resides in that which I give to thee. The Blessing wherewith I take the Bread communicates all the meritorious consequences of every act whereby I have taken the manhood into the Godhead and replenished it with the virtue of My perfected sanctification.

O Jesu, when Thou givest me Thyself to eat, surely Thou dost give me a treasury of virtue and of grace surpassing all human thought. Thou blessest us with spiritual blessings in heavenly places, while Thou makest us to eat the heavenly food. What Thou givest who can tell ? But what Thou art Thyself, the Giver, those shall know who feed upon Thy heavenly gift. It is Thy very Self, and though it comes to us in ways beyond understanding, it unites us in the fellowship of Thy wisdom. Thou shalt be revealed within us and shalt teach us all the things of God.

2. THE OPENING OF THE DISCIPLES' EYES.

The manner of the stranger prepared their hearts to acknowledge Him. The sacramental virtue of the gift opened their eyes.

When the eyes are opened it must be for the sight of Jesus, that we may worship Him as belonging to a higher world than that of natural sense. Our Lord said to the blind man whose faith He investigated, 'Thou hast both seen Him and it is He which talketh with thee. Then He worshipped Him' (John ix. 37). So now their eyes are opened, not to earthly but to heavenly realities.

How is 'it that we feed so often upon Jesus in the holy Eucharist and know Him not? It is because we do not act up to the measure of past knowledge. Ignorance does not hinder the efficacy of the Divine gift. These disciples knew not what to expect, yet their eyes were opened. Want of love is that which clouds the eye of the soul so that Jesus fails to give the illumination which is necessary. We cannot know Him but by loving Him, nor can we grow in His knowledge by the heavenly food unless it feed our love, so that we love Him more and more.

How great ought to be our love to Jesus after the repeated Eucharists wherein He has given Himself to us. We must not merely think of the general condescension whereby He vouchsafes to feed us in that He has instituted this holy ordinance. We ought to reflect upon the individual love of every

Communion, the manifold love exhibited by the oft repeated Communion which we have received from Him. O that our eyes were really opened as they should be.

That vision of Jesus must be no transitory one, for if we feed on Him He dwells in us abidingly. Yea! He comes to dwell in us in order that He may raise us up at the last day perfected in His likeness so as to see Him as He is. We must see Him therefore in ourselves that we may be able to see Him in the glory of His personal headship over the Church. So must this food open our eyes.

What an ecstasy of joy filled the hearts of those disciples when they woke up to this vision of Jesus. This is indeed He whom they have so long followed with filial love, owning Him as their Master. But how much did His glory surpass all their former conceptions of it. They had been bewailing Him as dead. What a victory is this that He has won over death itself. He lives again.

As we recognise Him dwelling in ourselves, we must remember that He is the very same Lord whom they followed. The lapse of ages has made no change in Him. We ought to welcome Him as returning a conqueror from the grave.

We are probably too apt to think of Christ's presence merely as a heavenly power, forgetful of the past experiences of human suffering through which He has passed. These experiences have not tarnished His glory. They have made His Manhood capable of manifesting that glory. We need to know Him *and the fellowship of His sufferings*, otherwise

we shall not be able to share in that ecstasy of joy which these two disciples must have known. The glory of Jesus returning from the grave can never pass away. We must not let our hearts ever lose the glow of its original truth. These disciples knew Him—we know Him—as ‘Jesus Christ, the same yesterday and for ever’ (Heb. xiii. 8).

The knowledge of Jesus is the growing knowledge of an eternal truth. It is attended with a growing consciousness. We learn its substantive character by internal experiences, we must show its real power by external transformation. The sight of Jesus must make us like to Jesus. Without this conformity we cannot know Him with a true abiding knowledge. To catch a glimpse of Jesus as of ‘gods ascending out of the earth’ (1 Sam. xxviii. 17) is not enough. To know Him truly is to be one with Him for evermore in life.

O Jesu, evermore let me know Thee and become one with Thee in all the joy of life everlasting. O let me know Thee how Thou hast become perfect through suffering : O let me know Thee how in suffering Thou wilt fill me with Thine own perfections : O let me know Thee in the joy of Thy risen life : O let me know the power of Thy resurrection that I may not sink in the bondage of death which holds my nature down !

My son, thou shalt know all things according to thy will. The wisdom which I give thee has no limit, only thou must feed thereon, appropriating it by faith, and meeting cheerfully all

the discipline of the Cross whereby this knowledge may be experienced.

O Jesu, when I think of Thee I feel myself ready to bear any and every cross which Thou mayest lay upon Me. Yea, I seem to desire all, for I know how marvellous is the knowledge which Thy members gain in the school of Thy holy Cross. But when I contemplate myself, then it is that I shrink from suffering. O deliver me from this body of death.

Yea, I desire to perfect thee in the Body of Life, even in Myself, My own glory, My own energy, My own joy. Hold not thyself back from Me, for indeed I will advance thee to honour, and the honour which I give is true, eternal, all-satisfying.

O Jesu, the gifts of the world pass away for they all must end in death, but Thou art risen from the dead and the gift of Thy life is a gift over which death can have no power. I know that the knowledge of Thee is the only satisfaction which my soul can find. Though I know my weakness by bitter experience, I know Thy power by the gladdening foretaste which faith imparts. I know that Thou canst keep me safe unto the end. Evermore abide in me, dear Lord. Save me from myself and reveal Thyself within me.

3. JESUS VANISHING FROM SIGHT.

What joy filled the hearts of the disciples as the knowledge of Jesus took possession of their understanding. Was it to be only for a moment? Would Jesus appear to them only to vanish away as soon as He was seen? Must they go forth sadly because the Lord had 'carried Him whither they knew not?' (1 Kings xviii. 12). Not so. He vanished but He was not gone. He had appeared not for a momentary surprise but for an abiding reunion. Now they know Him better far than any knowledge could warrant which the outward eye could gain. Now they know that He is more truly with them in the spiritual fellowship of the invisible than He ever could be in the visible proximity of material form.

They had been sad when they saw that He had died, but the joy into which they are now admitted will not tolerate any form of sadness. They would not detain Him in their sight if they were able, for they know themselves to be safe because He, their risen Lord, sees them. He can appear whenever He pleases. He will show Himself to them whenever it is good.

What a consciousness of the unseen world around them have these disciples gained by this revelation of Jesus. His vanishing away has intensified the consciousness and not destroyed it. Had He remained with them in earthly presence and visible form, they would have come to think of Him only as He was before. As He vanishes away, He draws

their hearts after Himself into the hidden world wherein He lives, and by so drawing He illuminates their hearts with the glory which is His own.

We need to have our hearts lifted up thus in fellowship with Jesus that we may know Him truly and find that knowledge to be our life. St. Paul says, 'Yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet henceforth know we Him no more.' The knowledge of Christ after the flesh is not the beginning of the knowledge of Him after the Spirit. The two are contradictory. How Christendom pines because Christian people fail of perceiving this!

Our Lord said before His death, 'It is expedient for you that I go away.' The Apostles, who knew what His presence was in that state of humiliation, could not understand the words. Now these two disciples have their hearts enlightened, so that they can accept them without hesitation. He is vanished, but He is not gone. At any moment He may be near. Yea! at every moment He is near, for they know the changeless power of love wherewith He ever watches over them.

He could not enter into His glory until He had suffered. Now they know that suffering in this present world is not to be avoided. It is the path the Saviour trod, and they must follow Him. They would not bring Him back to earth. They desire that He should raise them to heaven.

Already has He raised their hearts thither. The risen life is not a life in which He shall live rejoicingly while they are still left to struggle. It is a *life of power* which He communicates to them, calling

them to share it with Himself. Sorrows remain around them, but they have from Him an interior power which is beyond all reach of sorrow. This strengthens them. Whatever comes to them from without they can bear in the strength thereof. They no longer belong to earth, for 'their eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts,' not in His distant glory, but in the blessed companionship of that love which made Him die. He lives in triumph still. That love is the eternal law of His life.

This manifestation of the risen Saviour teaches us therefore how His risen Body is free from all necessities of outward form. He can clothe Himself with what form he pleases. The illuminative virtue of His Body is conveyed under forms which the outward sense cannot test. Experiences witness to the truth of promises, but those promises are true whether our experiences concur in the witness or no. We must not measure Him in His infinite glory by any apprehensions belonging to our finite condition of nature. To lose sight of Him is not to lose hold of Him. The hold which depends upon our natural sense is very feeble. We hold Him truly because He holds us in the grasp of love which He permits us to reciprocate.

O Jesu, hold Thou me up unto Thyself, and give me in Thyself the power that I may hold Thee.

Yea, My son, die thou to all thoughts of earthly fellowship. So shalt thou live in the heavenly fellowship of My glorified Humanity. From My risen Body I communicate to thee

the powers of the Spirit whereby thy faith may be quickened and thou shalt be enabled to lay hold on Me.

Jesu, my loving Lord, all my life is from Thee and in Thee. With Thee I would live unto the Father and evermore show forth the glory of Thy Name.

I will glorify thee truly in Myself, if thou wilt abide in Me. Remember how by the vows of Religion thou hast pledged thyself to be dead unto the world around thee. I vanished from the sight of the disciples. Even so must thou know thyself as living in a life unseen. That wherein thou appearest to the world must pass away. Thy true life, thy true self, is hid with me. Die to what is transitory, and thou shalt find the reality of the eternal.

So be it, gracious Lord. Henceforth I can heed nothing, if only I know that I am Thine.

MEDITATION XXXIV.

Individual Joy perfected in the Communion of Saints.

And after these things he was manifested in another form unto two of them, as they walked, on their way into the country. And they went away and told it unto the rest: neither believed they them.—St. Mark xvi. 12, 13.

And they said one to another, Was not our heart burning within us, while he spake to us in the way, while he opened to us the scriptures? And they rose up that very hour, and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them, saying, The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon. And they rehearsed the things that happened in the way, and how he was known of them in the breaking of the bread.—St. Luke xxiv. 33-35.

1. THE JOYOUS KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST.

THERE was no need for the disciples to speak one to the other of the fact of our Lord's appearance. It was the Lord. They knew it. They spoke therefore of their own feelings, how they had been mysteriously led onward to this knowledge, prepared for it by the gradual unfolding of the ancient prophecies. Was not our heart burning within us? Their hearts were indeed made one, so fully had they shared each other's sorrow, so perfectly had they been united in the experiences of that discipline whereby Jesus had drawn them to feel His power, so absolutely convincing was their intuition as to the Person who was made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

The heart of man demands a personal object on

which to rest. It was formed in the image of God, to rest upon God, and nothing void of personality can supply the return of consciousness which our affections require. The loveliest objects cannot awaken love unless they have a life corresponding with our own in intellect and affection.

This personal habit is what fits mankind for Divine worship. God is not merely known as an intellectual entity. He is worshipped as a Personal Being who takes interest in all our concerns. Philosophy may strive to aggrandise the infinity of God by robbing it of this element of personal character, but the vacuum which is thus created in the human conception of the Supreme is left as a dark foul cavern to become the home of noxious superstitions and idolatries. If man has lost the sight of the true Personality of God, he will try to make up for it by images of his own fancy, fashioning in horrid shapes the exhalations of this corrupt earth.

Even before the fall, however, the nature of God, although our nature was created in His image, was so infinitely removed from ours that it could not come within the proper grasp of man's restful embrace. He shone out before the mind of Adam as an object of desire, but He was not the companion which man needed in order to prosecute the journey of his probation in this imperfect state.

The Incarnation was a necessity in order that man might find his real rest in God. God must put Himself within our reach. Man could not ascend to heaven to bring God down to himself from above.

God therefore came. He came in such a manner as was most helpful to man. His coming must be gradual. Man must be prepared to receive Him. This is the reason why so many ages had to elapse before God appeared upon the earth. 'When the fulness of time was come, God sent forth His Son' (Gal. iv. 4).

The ages before Christ were not times of idle delay. They were times of preparation. By the messages of prophets 'in various parts and various manners' (Heb. i. 1), the truth of God was to be brought home to man's heart. The four thousand years were in some manner like the journey to Emmaus. Men's 'hearts burned within them' under the influence of the Divine word, as it pointed them onward to the promised gift of a Redeemer.

This expectation was not to be disappointed. The longing awakened in the soul by the Divine word was to find its eventual satisfaction in the Incarnation of the Divine Word. Thus would man's nature gain the fellowship with God which was essential to our happiness, as it was for this fellowship that we were formed.

It was a deep, deep longing that attested the necessities of the human soul. Deep however as it was, the gift of God was deeper still. When man could say, 'Now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace,' for Christ our peace was come, it was indeed a peace surpassing all understanding. The presence of God personally drawing near to us in the very substance of our flesh was a presence which not only satisfied; it transfigured, it inebriated. It took

man out of the weary consciousness of self into the rapturous consciousness of God. Man came 'to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that he might be filled with all the fulness of God' (Eph. iii. 19).

Such was the joy of these disciples. The conversation by the road side prepared their hearts with holy expectations. As they partook of the blest food, they found those hopes transformed into realities. The abstract desire suddenly blazed into the fulness of personal joy. The Divine love stood forth in full revelation before them.

So must the knowledge of Jesus ever be with joy to the prepared soul. We need the previous discipline of sorrow. Expectations must be disappointed before they can be fulfilled. The understanding must be developed by processes of gradual instruction. The heart must be drawn to follow Jesus through His sufferings and enter into the supernatural hope of the eternal glory. All this must be. Then when Jesus comes, great indeed is the joy. It is our own fault that we do not find more of it. God gives us discipline. We too often reject it. Fools as we are and slow of heart to believe, we cannot know the joy. Jesus walks with us by the way and trains us. He draws us out of ourselves. He seeks to bring us with Himself to God.

O Jesu, how can I worthily praise Thee for bringing me to the knowledge of Thyself? Many are the hopes which Thou hast awakened, but the knowledge of Thyself surpasseth all.

Blessed art thou, My son, if thou knowest the joy of My chosen ones. By the teaching of the Holy Ghost thou shalt gain this joy in ever-increasing fulness.

O how I fain would worship Thee, most gracious Lord. Thou alone canst be the joy of my soul. Truly the thought of Thee kindles within my breast a fire of Divine love sweeter than any earthly joy. O what shall it be to find Thee, to embrace Thee, to possess Thee as mine everlasting treasure, to be illuminated by feeding on Thee and by that illumination to feed on Thee the more. O sweet hunger which is increased by such sweet satiety. I could not be satisfied if I ceased to hunger for Thee. According to the greatness of my hunger is the fulness of satisfaction which Thou dost give.

2. THE RETURN TO JERUSALEM.

The joy which we find in the knowledge of Jesus cannot be kept to ourselves. As the lepers said, 'This day is a day of good tidings, we must not hold our peace' (2 Kings vii. 9), so 'if we tarry till the morning light,' that is, the resurrection morning, and tell not our brethren, 'some mischief will come upon us.' We are members one of another, formed each one of us to impart to others the joy which we ourselves have found.

They had left Jerusalem as a city of death. They return to it as being indeed the city of the Great King, the city of the Resurrection. Like those who blessed the Lord in the valley of Berechah,

‘they returned to go again to Jerusalem with joy; for the Lord had made them to rejoice over their enemies.’ (2 Chron. xx. 27).

If we contemplate the things of Christ with a carnal heart, we shall be filled with sadness. When we have experienced the power of Christ’s resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable to His death (Phil. iii. 10), earthly things no longer can possess any reality for us except as germinating with the resurrection-life.

O how does the soul long to communicate the consciousness of this resurrection! An irresistible impulse seizes the soul to make this joy known to those who are yet tarrying in the old earthly thoughts. The soul wonders at having been admitted to this knowledge. ‘We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen’ (John iii. 11), but our knowledge cannot be claimed as a result of any cleverness of our own. We have seen the risen Lord because He has met with us by the way. The message which we have to bear is the grateful acknowledgment of His goodness, the love which He has for us all, and which He shows to whomsoever He will, that they may make it known to others also.

How different do all the exercises of religion become when the spiritual power of the resurrection is acknowledged. We partake of sacraments as before, but all things are made new. They remind us that Christ died, but they communicate grace to us from Christ now risen. They are no longer mere links with a past, however filled with God that past *might be*. They convey to us the gifts of risen life,

and point us onward for the perfect and eternal fruition of that which is mysteriously but powerfully given to us as the actual possession of the present. If Jesus has met with us going to Emmaus, He will surely return with us to Jerusalem although we see Him not. O yes! As we move from place to place He is surely with us, for no place detains Him. To tell of the wonder of His Resurrection and appearance is the necessary utterance of grateful acknowledgment to which the inspiration of His indwelling Spirit urges us. We can be silent about that which is dead, however much we love. That which lives calls forth our love in words of life.

Indeed we must open our hearts to tell of the Divine joy which fills them! Unless we do so, we stifle that joy in the littleness of our own individuality. The perception of Divine truth is an interior personal joy; but it cannot live without the sustenance and largeness of corporate sympathy. Unless we share the higher experiences of Divine truth with the Church as the living Body wherein that truth becomes effectual, we shall find the highest sensibilities will die out in the frenzy of fanaticism and the feebleness of idiosyncrasy. We must share the truth along with others, for it cannot be a private communication. Truth is the prerogative of the Church, not of any individual in the Church. We must distrust every seeming truth unless it shows itself to be true by the test of mutual edification. As we help others by speaking of the things of the resurrection, we ourselves are helped by the living response of those whom God raises by our

message. These disciples returned to Jerusalem and found that the wonder which they had learned was already a matter of experience to others. Surely we must long for all to be perfected in Divine knowledge, that we and they may all of us together know the love which truth alone can kindle.

O Jesu, I thank Thee for all which Thou hast taught me. Teach others by me. Teach me along with them. As I reflect upon that which I have known from the beginning, grant me the experiences ever new whereby Thy Divine life shall be recognised therein.

Yea, My son, thou must learn all things with Divine love, and find how truth divinely edifies the members of My body, while they rejoice in the interchange of My grace.

O Lord, surely we must be confirmed by the mutual faith which is in us all, that we may live with the glory which belongs to Thee our common Head. The individual sight of Thee must give way to the greater vision which we have along with all Thy saints. Thou dost vanish from our individual sight. As individuals, one by one, we have not strength to detain Thee. Thou showest Thyself to us collectively in the communion of saints, so as to fill our hearts with the abiding vision of Thy peace.

8. THE ASSEMBLED COMPANY.

The eleven were assembled and others of the disciples along with them. Not apparently all the eleven, for Thomas was not there, and as they were speaking of the appearance vouchsafed to Simon, he also was probably absent. That which they had heard respecting him seems to have been the great matter of their wonder.

The entrance of these two disciples confirmed the intelligence. And yet some of those present were still unready to believe. How valuable their unbelief has proved, for it helps to make us realise the stupendous character of this article of faith. It shows us also that we cannot attribute its promulgation to any over-credulous or imaginative tendencies in the early company of disciples.

Yet their unbelief was not the doubt of hearts, loth to accept supernatural truth however surely attested, but the doubt of bewilderment and love which could not rise out of the present loss because the greatness of the gain surpassed the security of the reported visions. They doubted not the sufficiency of God's power but the prerogatives of their own position. They were as in a dream. New conceptions were being aroused. Their whole nature must be developed to lay hold upon the truth. Without the risen life we cannot know the risen Lord.

The company were speaking of our Lord's appearance to Simon. It may well be that penitential

awe kept him back to meditate upon the truth of the resurrection. As he and John were evidently much together on this day, the beloved disciple may not improbably have brought the tidings.

Nothing could have happened more fit to establish the truth of this report than this detailed narrative which the wayfarers could give of the conversation as they walked together. They did not merely report a vision. They showed the power of that vision by the knowledge which they had acquired. As they explained how the words of Holy Scripture were fulfilled in the sufferings and resurrection of Jesus, they not only brought the teaching of Holy Scripture to bear upon the present crisis, but they showed that they had been taken as it were into the secrets of inspiration. There was no earthly teacher who could have brought home to them the manifold bearings of prophecy and type. They were not themselves men of learning so as to know these things by study. The scattered teachings of Holy Scripture could not have been gathered together with such convincing simplicity and such suddenness of discovery save by a power truly Divine.

The breaking of the bread was of itself no small matter to corroborate their story. They had not been present at the last Supper. It is not likely, amidst the exciting circumstances of the interval, that the breaking of the bread would have formed a prominent object of thought. Probably these two disciples, not having been present, had not even heard of the Eucharistic institution. Yet they spoke of it as the means whereby He had become known to

them. Without any intention on their part, they would therefore make evident the illuminative character of that holy ordinance which Jesus had so recently enjoined. The teaching which they had received by His words showed the Divine power with which they had been associated. The identity of action was evidence of human and personal identity. He who sat with them at meat and vanished was evidently the very same who had blessed the bread and broken it on the night before His Passion. He had passed through the grave, but in his resurrection He remained His very Self.

O Jesu, teach me more and more. The mysteries of Thy love surpass all apprehension. In love to me Thou hast died. In that love Thou livest still. Let that love be my constant light. Though Thou vanish from before my natural sense, show Thyself the more clearly to the gaze of loving faith.

My son, I do not vanish from thy sight as if I were desirous to be hidden, but rather that I may draw thee to contemplate Me with the true powers, even as I will teach thee.

O Lord Jesu, truly I see Thee not when the outward eye seems to see Thee. Thy true self must be spiritually discerned. O then hide Thyself, and hide me with Thyself in the glory of the Father. Keep me back if Thou wilt from seeing Thee now, that I may see Thee in Thy fulness everlastingly.

MEDITATION XXXV.

The Closed Doors.

When therefore it was evening, on that day, the first day of the week, and when the doors were shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you.—St. John xx. 19.

1. THE SPIRITUAL BODY OF JESUS.

WE have seen the spiritual character of the risen Body of Christ manifested in His leaving the grave-clothes, in his coming forth from the sepulchre before the stone was rolled way, in His vanishing from before the two disciples with whom He was sitting at meat at Emmaus.

Now He presents Himself to the assembled community of the disciples, standing in the midst of them. He came then to them without motion. He did not pass through space to come from Emmaus to that chamber. He comes not through the door, for He passes not through space. He is passed away from the space of earth and the conditions of earthly locality. He comes, but from a region of which we can form no idea. Any one point of space is as near to Him in that hidden region as any other. He comes forth from His hiding-place and is suddenly seen standing in the midst. The disciples were seated around. Probably the various reports of the

resurrection of Jesus had drawn them together. Suddenly He Himself is manifest—the central figure of the assembled group.

Thus we learn somewhat of the properties of Christ's risen Body. He not only vanishes away like a spirit, leaving all the things around Him undisturbed, but He appears suddenly wheresoever He pleases. This has been intimated already in His appearance to the women, but the supernatural character of His manifestation was rather implied than enforced. Now He does not appear to individuals walking in open space as before, but in the midst of a company, and with the doors closed. He therefore could not have come to them from outside of the circle. He appeared standing in the midst.

Let us consider how such manifestation was possible. The force which constitutes our bodies holds together the particles of matter under which our bodies are outwardly manifest. We have not in our natural state command over this force so as to be able either to contract it or enlarge it. The laws of matter by which the outward particles are regulated constitute the laws under which we have to live. We cannot add one cubit to our stature, nor take away.

The body however has, even in ordinary life, a secret power of self-manifestation, as is seen by the process of growth. The acorn contains within itself the body of the oak tree which in the course of many years will be developed from it. The whole of the future development exists dynamically in the smallest seminal germ. What we know as size is a

condition of manifestation, not a necessity of perfect existence. The largest developments of body are by no means the best.

Indeed size is itself altogether a proportionate idea. When we speak of a yard, we are speaking of a measure determined by the relative measure of length and weight upon this earth of ours. If all things in the world could be indefinitely condensed or expanded, we should be quite unconscious of any change. We can see the vastest area of landscape diminished in a mirror so as to occupy but a small surface, and we have no reason to think that our bodies would be incapable of their actions if they were diminished in like manner, as long as they retained their present proportion towards the diminished universe.

Indeed the eye which gazes on the whole expanse of heaven only sees what it sees by reducing the indefinite realms of space to a point.

It is not then to be a matter of surprise to us that bodily action can be carried on in a manner altogether distinct from space as far as space is capable of being recognised by our senses. God does not exist in space. Space is merely the medium through which His operation is spread out before us for the apprehension of our senses. Rather is it God in whom space exists, the creature of His will.

The body of Christ, being raised from the dead, was no longer existing in subjection to the laws of this world of ours. The intelligences dwelling here are imprisoned by the laws of dead matter round about them. We may indeed conceive that spiritual

beings would have lived, holding the material particles of the world in subjection to themselves, if the world had never fallen away so as to become without form and void. At any rate the risen Body of Christ has become superior to them. It no longer lives under the yoke of darkness, density, extension, weariness. It possesses a spiritual solidity of its own which no wound of space can bring into decay. The things of space touch it not. It acts and moves in a condition of perfect security. The surroundings of space are no longer to be accounted amongst the conditions of its activity.

By the Incarnation the Word was made flesh that it might act through the medium of a material nature. By death He has escaped from the prison house in which for a while He humbled Himself. By the resurrection He has lifted up the material nature which He had assumed, so that it may no longer be an imprisoning channel to limit the exercise of His power, but a living organ to manifest the Almighty will of Him that dwells therein.

O Jesu, Thy Body can see no corruption. That which Thou hast taken unto Thyself Thou hast taken into the glory of the Eternal Life. Show Thou to me Thy power in the gift of Thy grace.

My son, there is no earthly power which can hinder My manifestation of Myself to Thee, and if thou wilt be faithful thou shalt be a witness of the things wherein I will yet appear unto thee.

O Lord, how can my carnal heart behold the revelation of Thy glory !

I will show Myself to thee in My risen power, that thou mayest know the power of My resurrection raising thee out of thyself.

O Lord, the very thought of the freedom of Thy resurrection makes the claims of earth disappear from my heart.

Take heed then, O My son, that thou respond to the appeal of My grace, for if thou comest to Me I will give to thee this freedom which thou perceivest to be in Me.

Yea, Lord, the blessedness of the spiritual life draws my soul away, but I need Thy grace to detach my heart that the flesh may lose its power.

My son, I entered not into My glory save by dying, and thou must die to the flesh that thou mayest know the power of My risen Body to quicken thee with everlasting life.

O Lord Jesu, when shall I depart from hence so as to be with Thee ! O let every moment of my life be a moment of dying, lest it be changed into an eternity of death. O that I were wholly dead and freed from sin. O bring me in the power of Thy resurrection to the freedom of the life of Thy beloved.

2. THE CLOISTERED CHURCH.

The company of the faithful were shut in when Jesus appeared to them. There was a twofold necessity for this. If there had not been this encl-

sure, they could not have known the supernatural character of the presence which was thus manifested in their midst. But also : if there had not been such a separation from the world, the disciples would not have had the necessary fitness to welcome such a manifestation. Continually do we need to be reminded that the Church of God must be shut off from the influence of the world if she is to appreciate the powers of the hidden life.

All doors which open to the world of sense must be closed if we would gaze inwardly and upwardly upon the truth of the Eternal. The gates of the grave separate the life of time and the life of eternity. We cannot live upon both sides of the grave. We must be separated from the world of death, abiding in the contemplation of the risen Lord, with doors closed as it were 'for fear of the Jews,' or we must be content to have our portion with the world of death to which Jesus shows not His resurrection glory.

Those who were assembled in this chamber were as it were, dead along with Jesus. Although they had not yet risen to the consciousness of a new life with Him beyond the power of the Jews, yet they knew themselves to be excommunicated from the old Synagogue by their devotion to Him that had died. The consciousness of separation, with its outward sadness, must precede the joyousness of knowing the risen life in itself. So was it with these disciples. They were shut off from the rest of their fellow-countrymen and knew the resurrection of Jesus only as a cause of apprehension to themselves because the rumours respecting it might urge the Jews to active

persecution. They knew it not as a ground of confidence on which they could themselves rely for victory.

Indeed, as He had died, it must have seemed to them a natural thing that He should leave them to die also. If He were risen indeed, He might in some way raise them from death, but it must have seemed to them that they must die like Him beneath the power of the enemy.

We should remember that it is the natural condition for the disciples of a Crucified Lord to live in this world with 'the doors shut for fear of the Jews.' The triumph of the resurrection is not intended to brighten the relations between us and the world to which Christ died, but to open to us the glory of that spiritual world into which He entered. To live to the one is to be dead to the other.

O Jesu, let me lie hidden from the world, that I may experience the sweet manifestations of Thy risen life.

My son, count it not hard that thou hast much to suffer at the hands of the world. Thou must know what it is to fear their malice if thou art to know what it is to find My grace.

Living and dying, let me belong, dear Lord, to Thee. I seek not to escape from the world's enmity, if only I may abide in Thy love.

If thou lovest me truly, there is nothing for thee, My son, to fear. Even death itself cannot harm thee if thou livest in the power of My resurrection.

O Lord, lift up my soul to the full consciousness of spiritual life along with Thee in Thy glory. The door of the grave must shut the world out of my sight, and me from the world. Hidden indeed I must be, and the world cannot know me, for I am dead, and my life is hid with Thee in the very glory of God.

3. THE GIFT OF PEACE.

The disciples were assembled now in fear of the Jews. Jesus brings them peace. His own appearance filled them with alarm, but He brought them peace. They needed that peace by reason of their natural fears, and yet the form in which Jesus gave it to them woke up a supernatural fear within them.

How apt we are to think of the consolations of religion as if they ought to hush the fears of nature, and to forget that there is something much more awful in the Divine peace than in the world's turmoil.

On the mount of Transfiguration the three disciples trembled as they entered into the cloud. So afterwards the beloved disciple fell down as dead before the glorious vision of the Lord he loved.

In truth Divine consolation dispels human fear by awakening the soul to that which is greater.

None the less real is that peace which God gives to His people in the midst of the world's alarms. It is such a peace as can be known only to those who are separated by death, placed beyond the reach of worldly joy and worldly fear.

We are not to think that Jesus brings us peace of any worldly character. Rather He is come to

send forth a sword upon the earth, and we must be hated of men for His name's sake. That hatred cannot cease. The peace of God which passeth understanding lifts up the soul into a new order of life when the outward antagonisms of the world are no longer felt.

The vision of the risen Saviour gives this peace effectually if we are prepared to welcome Him. And we must know the peace of dying to the world before we can attain the peace of Divine confidence.

If we cannot be at peace from worldly disquiet until we have found the peace of Divine confidence, we never shall rise to the full joy of our Divine sonship. We must learn the nothingness of earthly things in the presence of Jesus before we can learn the reality of the heavenly joys which Jesus has to give.

Our religion is very apt to be felt as an earthly sentiment by reason of our seeking Divine peace and joy before we have died to the world. We cease to fear the world while we tremble in the presence of God, and from that Divine fear true wisdom comes, and peace and perfect joyous love. We do not give ourselves to God because we do not fear Him. We give in reverent obedient fear. He claims us as His own. 'Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him' (Job xiii. 15). I know not what He has for me, but I know what He is. He deserves my love, and there is nothing which I can heed in the world in comparison with Him.

O Jesu, speak Thou peace to my soul, that no fears of the world may any longer disturb me.

I have called thee, My son, to forget the world. Seest it not, nor the things that are therein.

O Lord, truly the things of the world are worthless as the ornaments of the sepulchre to those who are called to live with Thee in the life of the resurrection.

Yea, my Son, all is left behind, all must be forgotten, if thou wilt really know the truth of a life risen along with Me.

So be it, Lord. The world is crucified to me and I unto the world by the fellowship of Thy Cross, and a new world opens out to me in the glory of Thy resurrection, and old things pass altogether away. How can I fear anything in the world when I have learnt to fear Thee !

MEDITATION XXXVI.

The Risen Body of Jesus.

And afterward he was manifested unto the eleven themselves as they sat at meat; and he upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen.—St. Mark xvi. 14.

But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they beheld a spirit. And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? And wherefore do reasonings arise in your heart? See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye behold me having. And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. And while they still disbelieved for joy, and wondered, he said unto them, Have ye here anything to eat? And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish. And he took it, and did eat before them.—St. Luke xxiv. 37-43.

And when he had said this, he showed unto them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord.—St. John xx. 20.

1. THE UNBELIEF OF THE DISCIPLES.

It seemed to them that what they saw must be a spirit. Suddenly appearing before them after the manner of a spirit, how could it have the reality of flesh? Quickly we may believe they began to interpret the reports of the former appearances of Jesus as having been the manifestations of a spirit. Whatever terror might belong to such apparitions, they were more conceivable than a bodily resurrection. The disciples were not prepared to accept in its simplicity the doctrine of the resurrection, nor

could they understand that in the resurrection the body which had been subject to material laws in its former state of existence was now so changed as to be able to act in the freedom of spirit-life.

The appearance filled them with fear. The separation of soul and body must be a cause of terror, whether we behold the dead corpse or the disembodied spirit.

The state of separation is unnatural. It is penal. It makes us feel the power of death. Seeing that power thus exhibited in another, we feel as if the activity of another world were close to ourselves. Even beside the corpse we seem to be brought close to that power, but much more when the spirit comes forth to our view it makes us sensible of some abnormal activity in the powers of the unseen world generally so quiescent.

It may seem to us a strange thing that the form of Jesus could awaken terror under whatever circumstances it might be seen. We must remember that the disciples did not know Him in the fulness of truth in which we know Him. He was 'declared to be the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead' (Rom. i. 4), and they had not yet this knowledge. We must strive to realise how strongly the fact of His death had enforced upon them His human character, obliterating for the time any gleams of supernatural expectation which might have lit up their hearts from time to time before. They may have imagined Him to be something more than man, so that the words of St. Peter expressed a natural sentiment, 'That be far from

thee, Lord' (Matt. xvi. 32). Now that He had died, the reality of His human nature was manifest in the fulness of its humiliating conditions, and they were not prepared as yet to acknowledge Him as being truly God and truly man in one Person.

When our Lord had spoken the word of peace, He saw them still terrified. His supernatural glory, which had so long been latent beneath the veil of His Humanity, instead of bringing them comfort caused them fear. 'Why are ye troubled?' So He addresses them. The only reason why they should have found comfort in their former intercourse with Him was by reason of this supernatural power whose triumph over death His presence now made manifest.

'Why do thoughts arise in your hearts?' He reads all hearts, and He knew how they were variously questioning the truth of what they saw. He saw that instead of giving Him the simple welcome of love, they were questioning how this could really be. How could the form which seemed so real as it stood before them be indeed a true body, since it had sprung up as it were without motion in the very midst of them, and they knew that all the means of bodily approach were closed?

They questioned the reality of the fact because they could not explain its possibility.

How great a lesson is there here for us! All the operations of grace are, and must be, of such a nature as to defy our conception of possibility. If they did not, they would be acts of nature, belonging to the world of ordinary life, not to the higher king-

dom of grace and the mysterious consequences of the resurrection. Whatever belongs to Christ's risen Body must belong to it under conditions different from those of its earthly existence. The grace that is found in Him is the radiation of the glory into which He is entered. His Body can never again be subject to the same accidents as before it rose. All its operations must be proper to that inherent vitality which it possesses in a condition of freedom from material limitations.

O Jesu, how slow I am to recognise Thy presence. How blind is my spiritual understanding, so that I fail to rise up to any conceptions which are above this lower world.

Doubt not, My son, of the truth of My word because it surpasses thine understanding. Seek by the teaching of My Holy Spirit to rise up to the glory of My resurrection.

Yea, Lord, I desire to put aside all reasonings, for I know that no power of human thought can grasp the truth of Thy risen glory. Thou art gone beyond the compass of my understanding, but Thou drawest me after Thyself by the cords of Thy love. However changed may be the outward conditions of Thy nature, in the unchangeableness of Thy love Thou makest Thyself known to me, that by faith I may apprehend Thee and learn to love Thee in a manner more worthy of Thyself.

2. THE IDENTITY OF CHRIST'S RISEN BODY.

'Handle me and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have.' Although Christ's Body had come before them in the manner of a spirit, nevertheless it still possessed its own solidity. It could pass into a region outside of space, and free from the dimensions of natural form, but now as it appeared in space it could make itself evident to all the senses just as it was before. His presence amongst them was no mere apparition of a spirit as when Samuel after death appeared to Saul. The very Body was there which had lain in the grave, although the particles of matter were held together not by the perishing power of a life that might be forfeited but by the inherent glory of an eternal will. By this will He could make Himself manifest to their eyes or withdraw from sight. By this will He could make Himself manifest to their touch or withdraw into the impalpable secrecy of His spiritual abiding place. By this will He could make Himself manifest in whatever form He might be pleased to assume, so that, as had already happened, they who knew Him well would fail to recognise Him : or He could, as He had done, vanish instantaneously, so that eye and ear and touch could not perceive His presence any more.

This Body was the very Body which had been laid in the grave. 'He showed unto them His hands and His side.' The marks of His Passion *must* convince them of His identity. Other forms

He might assume, appearing in vision or veiling Himself in mystery, but these marks He would show to them that they might feel assured that this Body in which He now appeared was indeed the Body which was crucified. He might show Himself under various forms, as He willed, in order to teach His people various truths through such symbolical manifestations, but now He wished to teach them the natural identity of His Body remaining undestroyed by the resurrection change, and therefore He shows it to them as bearing the marks which would naturally abide upon it.

The disciples could not but yield to such demonstration. Stronger than the solidity of substance which they were thus permitted, yea, commanded to feel, was the evidence of His loving sympathy, His intuitive apprehension of their inmost reasonings, His appeal to the imperishable tokens of His redeeming love. The unbelief of reason died away.

They knew Him now to be His very Self. A strange joy filled their being. If fear and ignorant reasonings made them doubt at first, joy with enrapturing wonder makes them doubt again. 'They believed not for joy, and wondered.'

They rejoiced, for they could not doubt His identity. They doubted, for all seemed to be like a dream.

As they felt themselves to be so near the risen Saviour whom they had lost, surely it seems as though they were themselves taken away from earth rather than that He has come back. All seems to be unreal save their fellowship with Himself. The

words of the Psalmist sum up their thoughts. 'When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, then were we like unto them that dream' (Ps. cxxvi. 1).

O Jesu, how great is the joy of Thine appearing. The natural heart cannot rise up to its truth, but the truth thereof raises us up to the supernatural fellowship of Thy risen glory.

Verily, My son, thou must know the joy that surpasses nature if thou wouldst rise up to the truth of Mine eternal kingdom.

O Lord, how cold is my heart. Though with my reason I bow down to Thy words, yet I fail to rise upward as I should do in the transport of Thy love.

My son, the truth of My resurrection in glory must indeed be loved in order to be truly known, and faith which is not made perfect in love is not worthy of the name.

O Lord, I must confess my earthliness. Nature in assenting to Thy truth cannot rise to the transport of such joy. I need to be established in the experience of Thy grace, that my understanding and my affections may appropriate what my reason can no longer refuse to believe.

3. THE SOLIDITY OF HIS BODY.

Christ's Body, though He did not occupy the dimensions of space, had a firm solid cohesiveness of all its parts which was much greater than could belong to anything that is within the region of space.

That which exists in various points of space is capable of being broken up into many parts. That which underlies space has a solidity of a higher kind, indissoluble, absolutely one. Space serves it as a transparent medium, through which it makes itself known. Space is transparent for such forms of spiritual power, transparent not only for the sense of seeing, but for every sense transparent, so that to those who are living in space, that which is behind space can make its presence known to sight, or touch, or hearing, or any other perception.

Space is to it as a flexible veil, under which it works and makes its workings manifest. Spirit is a hidden force, or rather combination of forces, which, as they operate in their own sphere, are capable of being recognised by those whose sensibilities are akin to them. As the forces of electricity and of magnetism operate through space to attract and repel without disturbing the medium through which they work from the originating centre to the particular object which is affected by their power, so do spiritual substances work in a spiritual manner.

God is omnipresent in His own essence, but the operations of God are not the same everywhere and at all times. The glorified Body of Christ is the medium of their communication. In that Body they have their rise. Although not limited by space, they have their limitation by the laws of that Body, their origin from its will, and their mode of operation from its form. The grace of this Body is consequently no mere result of overwrought imagination. It is not, as men speak nowadays, subjective only

Neither, again, is it ubiquitous or Divine. It exists under the conditions of created life, but in a higher form than our laws of space can regulate. It has not lost those properties which constitute the essence of material existence, for, if it had, it would have ceased to be itself.

That which is in glory would not in that case be a manifestation of that which hung on Calvary. It has only lost, or rather it has risen out of, those accidental indications of its essence which constituted its manifestation in the lower world by reason of its connection with the particles of matter which it derived from the lower world. In the earthly state of humiliation Christ had a Body bearing the likeness of our sinful flesh, and consequently subject to the trammels of material existence as experienced by ourselves. If He ever asserted His own freedom from those trammels of our subjection to vanity, His doing so was a miraculous action as much as when He wrought a miracle on the bodies of other men. Now in His risen estate the particles of matter which were in His Body when he died have become changed in their nature, so as no longer to be the trammels, but now to be the instruments, of the glorified Humanity. So St. Paul, speaking of our own resurrection, says, 'We shall all be changed' (1 Cor. xv. 51). Formerly they impeded the force which is the real essence of His Body, the force which holds them together and makes them human flesh and human bones and human blood. Now that force which elevates those particles into the order of life *proper* to man operates through them unimpeded.

As the flint stone, clarified into glass, no longer impedes the faculty of sight, but helps it, so the material particles raised in glory no longer confine, but seem to transmit and communicate the forces of the glorified Body to which they belong.

This was the lesson which our Lord desired now to teach the assembled Church. They must learn the true material character of the resurrection, while perceiving the spiritual character proper to His present mode of existence.

Jesus said, 'Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself; handle Me and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see Me have.'

He was not a mere impalpable Spirit. His Body was a spiritual Body. So St. Paul says, 'There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body' (1 Cor. xv. 44). His spiritual, living Being ruled His material frame, not by occasional demonstrations of sovereignty, as when He was upon the earth, but by a continuous law of living power. That previous condition was a humiliation to which man was subjected by reason of death, and to this Jesus had subjected Himself, so as to bear our sins. All forms of sickness and suffering, weariness, hunger, sense of cold, feebleness, exhaustion, belong to that law of death from which He is now altogether free. 'Death hath no more dominion over Him.' Now in His resurrection He is His own true self, both in Body and Soul, the very Jesus who was crucified.

O Jesu, let me alway live in the power of Thy grace. Thou art exalted at the Right Hand of the

Father, but Thou art present with us by the operation of a virtue which no surroundings of matter can any longer hide.

O My son, why dost thou not live in the constant remembrance of My being thus present with thee at all times? Let love make thee more mindful of Me, so shall My grace sustain thee.

Lord, if I could have Thee in the companionship of nature, I would rest in Thy care and live simply for Thee; but now that Thou art exalted it requires an effort beyond all possibilities of nature to lay hold upon Thy grace and walk in the fellowship of Thy resurrection.

True, My son, and I have given thee My Holy Spirit that thou mayest thus walk with Me and experience in thyself the power of My resurrection, even as thou seest the reality thereof manifested in My person.

Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief. O Lord, help me to recognise all that I suffer in the flesh as given me by Thee, in order to make me rise to Thee, that I may no longer walk after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

Son, let no earthly things be as realities to thee, to be desired: so shalt thou find that none of them are realities against thee, to be dreaded. Let My risen Body be the sole object of thy joy, so shalt thou find My risen Body to be the sufficient instrument of thy power.

O Lord Jesu, if I have Thee, I have all. Quicken the eye of my soul to behold Thee, that I may not

be wearied but strengthened by the holy vision. Strengthen my hands to embrace Thee with the grasp of faith, that I may find nothing in heaven beyond my reach, but may rise to Thy glory, being nourished by Thy substance. O, while I am clothed with the flesh in its infirmity, let me ever be drinking into myself the power of Thy risen triumph, that I may be made superior to death.

MEDITATION XXXVII.

The Broiled Fish and the Honeycomb.

And while they still disbelieved for joy, and wondered, he said unto them, Have ye here anything to eat? And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish. And he took it and did eat before them.—St. Luke xxiv. 41-43.

1. JESUS EATS BEFORE THEM.

THERE is yet a further test of the reality of His resurrection. They must see its power upon the material universe around them. This power is principally exerted by the act of eating.

Jesus therefore asks them if they have any meat; and they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish and of an honeycomb.

By eating He transforms the external world, assimilating it to Himself. This shows the perfect truth of His own existence. He does not merely act upon our senses, but He acts upon the inanimate world. He acts not merely as the outward flash of lightning, blasting by its touch, but by His own lifegiving power He takes up the food from the lower order of created existence subject to death and to corruption, and assumes it into His own living and glorified frame, so that henceforth and for ever it shall live in Him. The earthly food becomes spiritual when He eats thereof.

When He shall vanish from sight of man, this

food will vanish along with Him. His risen form is not merely a Spirit. If it were it could not assimilate the food. It is a spiritual Body, having its true relation to the material world, so that it can take of the things of the material world, and raise them to its own glory.

How full of encouragement to the disciples was this manifestation of His risen life! If He could take that broiled fish to live in Himself, He could also take His people into real living union with Himself.

This act was full of teaching, for it not only spake of the present reality of His resurrection, but it also symbolised its future extension. It showed that He had power to take themselves into Himself, which He had promised to do by regeneration, and then again the bread and wine of holy Eucharists He would take into Himself by the power of consecration.

His Body should indeed be ever mystically feeding upon the multitude of His redeemed, not to make them perish in satisfaction of His hunger, but to make them live in participation of His power.

His Body was not a mere phantasm, so that what He took in His hand would fall to the ground for want of a solid hand to grasp it. He took and ate before them.

That which He thus truly ate became a part of His very Self, was absorbed into His spiritual power, was transformed into that mode of existence in which His risen Body was itself existing.

Thus He teaches us His power to take and spi-

ritualise the things of earth. He has not lost an apprehensive power by having risen to that higher life. The body in our natural life has the power of taking into itself that which is suitable, and assimilating by digestive processes that whereon it feeds. The Body of Christ risen into new life takes into itself that which it wills, and feeding thereon by this spiritual appropriation, it can communicate its own spiritual character to that which is earthly.

Thus does the Body of Christ by the power of the Holy Ghost take our bodies into itself in holy Baptism. 'Our bodies are made the members of Christ' (1 Cor. vi. 15). And then again by the same power the Body of Christ takes the bread and wine of the holy Eucharist into itself. 'This is My Body, This is My Blood.'

The Body of Christ is not in either case lowered to earthly existence by such assumption. That which it assumes is taken up into its own spiritual power.

As the Body of Christ is not limited to any earthly form of manifestation now that it is raised in spiritual glory, there is no difficulty in our acknowledging such spiritual assumption of earthly existences although they remain in the outward manifestation of their natural substance. The glorified substance of Christ's Body belongs to the order of a higher world. Its presence under the veil of a natural substance of this present world, whether personal or impersonal, is none the less real because it is inappreciable to our natural organs of perception. He could, had He so pleased, have left the broiled fish remaining in its

natural appearance and have disappeared from sight as He fed thereon. He took it into Himself ere he vanished, and made it vanish with Himself, in order to show the reality of that abiding identification with Himself into which it was thus mysteriously taken.

Thus did our Lord show by this action, not only the substantial reality of His risen Body, which otherwise might have seemed to be merely phenomenal and void of substance, except at moments of occasional apparition, but also He showed that His Body now risen was still in some manner to grow by taking into itself external substances, utilising them for its own purposes, and spiritualising them with its own life. He showed that the sacramental extension of His Body was to be no idle phrase, but a real fellowship in the risen life between Himself, as the Head, and His members, who remaining for a while below, should at length be taken up to be with Him in His glory, 'caught up' in His final manifestation, so that they should be 'for ever with the Lord' (1 Thess. iv. 17).

O Jesu, blessed be Thy Name, that Thou dost gather us into Thyself. Surely as Thou dost take us into Thyself, Thou dost transform us into Thine own life.

Thy life is hid with Me in God, and I, My son, am hidden beneath thy substance. I destroy not thy old nature, though I take thee into Mine. My Nature I give to Thee, even My risen Humanity glorified with the inherent power of My Godhead, that by the virtue there-

of the vileness of thine old nature may be destroyed.

Would, my Lord, that my old nature could altogether pass away !

My son, thou must practise mortification that it may be brought to nought, and the glory of Thy spiritual nature may be revealed within thee as the germ of thy resurrection. My risen Body is that which shall raise up thine, and thy sinful body shall be found no more if thou art transformed into Me.

O Lord, I will no longer live for the flesh, the body of sin. I will live henceforth for Thy Spiritual Body which Thou hast given to live within me.

Consider well, My son, that unity of the life of the resurrection whereinto I have called thee with Myself. It is not for a short time alone that I would join thee to Myself. Abide in Me now as I have called thee, and thou shalt abide in the full participation of My glory everlastingly.

O my Lord Jesu, how great is the condescension of Thy love whereby Thou dost ask me to give myself to Thee. O stablish me in Thyself according to the discipline of Thy grace. Take me out of my own power that I may not fall away from Thee. Yea, let me die to myself, that in Thee I may find the security of the life everlasting.

2. THE PIECE OF A BROILED FISH AND OF AN
HONEYCOMB.

It is remarkable how the fish is mentioned on various occasions of eating with Christ. So in the two miracles of the multiplication of the loaves, and on the morning by the lake at Galilee.

The fish is a symbol not only of Christ but of Christians, as His members, separated from the world around them by the gift of baptismal life.

If Christ asks us for 'something to eat,' we cannot offer to Him anything that belongs merely to the order of nature. We must give ourselves to Him as partakers of the life of grace. As the water speaks of grace, so the fire whereon the fish was broiled speaks of the Holy Ghost. He who at the first came down in fiery tongues is communicated to us by the onflowing agency of sacramental grace exhibited by the water.

The broiled fish is understood to be symbolical of Christ in His Passion. We can only give to Christ to eat of that which He has given to us, and that is nothing but Himself.

He does indeed look to us to satisfy the mysterious hunger of His glorified Humanity. It is not the hunger of feebleness, needing to be sustained, but the hunger of power, delighting in the fresh manifestations of His own redeeming virtue. His Passion lives on in His people; and He desires to see of the travail of His Soul, and to be satisfied with the product of His own toil. He the Creator, He the Redeemer

asks what we have to give which shall satisfy His longing.

We offer Christ to Christ while we fill up that which remains of His sufferings for His Body's sake, which is the Church. Nothing remains to be suffered as if Christ's sufferings were incomplete ; but much remains to be suffered, because Christ's sufferings are the beginning of a living law which is henceforth to rule His Body, the Church. As He the Head suffered, so must we the members.

Therefore it was not a whole fish which was given to Him upon this occasion. We give Him only fragments as it were of His own Passion. He suffered alone in His completeness. We in our suffering suffer only as being part of Himself. He suffers in us.

In the furnace of affliction the members of Christ are claimed by Himself as His own. Our sufferings are not in vain. We must make an offering of them to Him while we suffer with Him.

The fish and the honey were articles which could not be offered in sacrifice according to the Jewish law. The sufferings which we offer to Him as His members are accepted of God through Him, but could not be offered to God as having any natural fitness for which He should accept them, nor would the merit of any acts of ours rise up before God by nature. Our acts are pleasing to Him only in the glorifying power of the resurrection.

Honey seems to be the symbol of our Lord's Passion, the sweet offering which He presents to God, gathered with much toil from all the individuals

of the human race. It is not that He finds that sweetness in those to whom He comes. The sweetness is His own, the merit of His own Divine Sonship. Nevertheless it is by His individual visitation of each soul that His redeeming Love makes the sweet offering to spring out of all our sins. The sweet purpose of God's creative love is collected from the multitude for whom He suffers, and presented in the great offering of His Passion. He comes into the Garden of Humanity, even as of old the voice of the Lord was heard among the trees of the Garden of Eden. He gathers myrrh with spices, giving Himself up to die. He eats His honeycomb with honey, rejoicing in the merits of His Death and Passion. He drinks of His wine, in the inebriating joy of the resurrection-life, with milk which is the nourishing power of the Divine Word, making all the children of the covenant to grow unto the fulness of the appointed stature (Cant. v. 1).

He is the true Samson who found the honey in the carcase of the lion. That lion was His own Humanity, as He is the lion of the tribe of Judah : that honey the merits of His Passion.

The manna was like wafers made with honey, for it were of no use that He should give us His flesh to eat unless it had within it this sweetness of meritorious obedience.

This it was which lightened the eyes of Jonathan (1 Sam. xiv. 29). The land of the covenant was a land flowing with milk and honey, itself a symbol of the Humanity of Christ, the Bride of whom the Eternal Son speaks in the Canticles. 'Thy lips, O

my spouse, drop as the honeycomb : honey and milk are under thy tongue ; and the smell of thy garments is like the smell of Lebanon ' (Cant. iv. 11).

The judgments of the Lord are more to be desired than gold, even than fine gold, by their Divine glory ; sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb by their human sympathy (Ps. xix. 10).

O Jesu, by nature I had no power to give myself to Thee, but as regenerated in Thyself, I pray Thee to accept me.

Yea, My son, I will accept thee in the presence of all My disciples. When all are gathered together in the day of resurrection I will accept thy sufferings in the grace of My own passion, and those things which thou hast endured secretly I will reward openly.

O Blessed Lord, I rejoice to make the offering to Thee, and when I know that Thou dost accept it I learn to praise Thee for Thine infinite goodness. Thou dost accept that which we offer, not to satisfy the hunger of Thy necessity, but to manifest the triumph of Thy power.

O My son, I delight in all that I enable thee either to suffer or to do. Right dear in My sight is the death of My saints, for I make them to live with Me in the power of an endless life.

O Lord Jesu, I would give myself to Thee in the fire of Thy Passion and the sweetness of Thy resurrection. O take me unto Thyself. As Thou dost condescend to be my food in sacraments, so let Thine hunger be satisfied in me while Thou dost behold the

travail of Thy soul effectually producing within me the fruits of holiness.

3. COMMUNION OF LIFE WITH CHRIST.

St. Peter spoke to Cornelius and his friends concerning the resurrection of Christ, that 'God showed Him openly, not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with Him after he rose from the dead' (Acts x. 41). He therefore attached great importance to this fact of Christ feeding along with His disciples.

Important as the fact was evidentially, it had further meanings which we ought to bear in mind.

In the sacrifice of peace offerings, the offerer partook of the victim, while part of it was consumed by fire upon the altar. This was symbolically the feast with God, for the fire which consumed represented God's participation in the sacrificial banquet. This was a restoration of that earlier enjoyment of life which man was intended to have. As he ate of the fruit of the trees of the garden, he was rejoicing in God's works along with God. All true joy depends for its sanctity upon the consciousness of God's participating in the delight.

When man had fallen this could no longer be true in any adequate sense. It needed to be restored by sacrifice. By the institution of peace offerings God was pleased to restore it in some measure.

But the law of sacrifices developed another idea of food besides this.

In feeding we take into ourselves some lower

organism, and assimilate it to our own nature. The whole chain of created life is ordered with a view to the gathering together of all things in Christ the Incarnate God. He raises our nature by the Incarnation, and as man He raises all the lower creation whereby man is fed.

Man, however, is fallen. Christ therefore, in taking our nature upon Himself, takes our sins upon Himself. This was symbolised in the Tabernacle by the high priest eating the body of the sin offering. He ate it mediatorially as God's representative (Lev. vi. 16), and thus he bore the sins of the people upon himself, took them into himself. In failing to do this Aaron increased the displeasure of Moses. He failed of God's appointment. God had given the goat of the sin offering to them to bear the iniquity of the congregation, to make atonement for them before the Lord. In burning the victim they had failed of the express purpose of their ministry (Lev. x. 17). The victim which represented the guilty worshipper was to become one with the priest and pass over into his state of sanctification. So with Christ. The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all. He takes us sinners into His only holy nature, and the Divine life in that humanity burns out the sinfulness which is in us. In taking us individually into union with Himself by holy Baptism, He as it were feeds upon us. We die to our old selves, and live to Him and in Him as members of His Body.

Before His death, He ate for the sustenance of life, according to the prophecy, 'Butter and honey

shall He eat.' After the resurrection He partook of food with His disciples, and showed them that the lower creation was to be raised by the fellowship of His resurrection. We are not told that He and they ate and drank at a common table. They gave Him to eat, but apparently did not then eat while He was with them. He gave them to eat upon a subsequent occasion, but we are not told that He partook of the food which He gave to them. There was a mutual communication, but apparently not a conjoint participation. He and they ate for different purposes, and the symbolism would be destroyed if they had partaken of the food together as if they had the same necessities. They who ate and drank with Him were those whose sins He had taken away by uniting them to Himself, not indeed completely, but by an initial process. They were to take part with Him in extending the consequences of His resurrection, gathering the world into union with themselves as His mystical Body.

He uses the priestly ministrations of His Church for the purpose of feeding upon the world, uniting it to Himself that He may sanctify it. Thus He is forming that new heaven and earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. That final consummation whereby God shall become all in all is the completion of a process of elevation and spiritual development operating in the created world from the beginning.

Such development is not the mere reaching out of inferior creatures until by effort they have acquired faculties or organism higher than their own.

It is the work of the higher creatures who are sustained in existence by feeding on what is below.

The lower creatures are formed so as to have a natural adaptability for such elevation, but they cannot raise themselves. Moreover, all things are not suitable for the food of all, cannot become immediately identified with certain others, and consequently there are certain lines of progress marked by nature which cannot be transgressed.

Also, in this world of sin and death that which eats destroys that whereon it feeds. In the higher life, where death is unknown, there is a mystical feeding whereby the higher life absorbs the lower into union with itself, not destroying it, but quickening it with higher powers.

There is a mutual feeding whereby both are made one. 'He that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me,' and that even 'as I live by the Father' (John vi. 57). So again, by feeding upon earthly substances, the risen Christ spiritualises, sanctifies. He removes the sinfulness of those whom He joins to His Body, and by joining them to Himself His Body grows to the fulness of the predestined stature.

Meanwhile the mysterious transformation is going on. As we see the sheep grazing in the field, we see the great process of transformation in one of its lower stages. Nevertheless the law is the same which is manifested in a higher stage by the sacramental assumption of the creatures into union with the Body of Christ by the ministry of His Church. The new world is being thus gathered out of the old into

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the fellowship of Christ's resurrection by the power of the Holy Ghost.

O Jesu, as Thou hast taken me into Thyself, let me evermore live for Thee.

Yea, My son, I have taken thee into Myself that thou mayest no longer be as one having part in the lower world. Thou must live in Me, so that by thee I may raise others also into fellowship with Myself.

O Lord, Thy risen life is an abiding life. All other life passes away. Blessed indeed are those whom Thou dost take into the fellowship of Thy glory. Henceforth I will own no pleasure upon the earth save that which I can enjoy along with Thee in the consciousness of Thy loving participation. In Thee, with Thee, for Thee shall be my joy. Thou callest me to rejoice with Thee upon the earth, that in Thee I may rejoice eternally.

MEDITATION XXXVIII.

Prophecies Fulfilled.

1. THE LAW OF MOSES.

And he said unto them, These are my words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, how that all things must needs be fulfilled, which are written in the law of Moses and the prophets, and the psalms, concerning me.—St. Luke xxiv. 44.

1. CHRIST'S COMING A CRISIS FORE-ANNOUNCED.

IF we think of our Lord as having developed the general principles of His triumph through suffering when discoursing with the two disciples in the guise of casual companionship, we may well imagine that He would now call to memory the evidential details of His life as He spoke to the assembled Apostles in His own Person. How many of these events were themselves the objects of prophecy? They understood them not at the time. Now they must learn the Divine power which ruled in the midst of them.

His life was a crisis in the world's history.

Jesus might recall his predictions of the overthrow of Jerusalem, and admonish them how that event would make it impossible for Messiah to be manifest at any future time. He was Shiloh. Shiloh was to appear before Judah's sceptre had finally passed away (Gen. xlix. 10). David's eternal sovereignty would live on in Himself alone, the

Divine King to whom all nations of the earth would bow. The tribal organisation of Judah could never be recovered. When Israel, driven from Jerusalem, was sifted through all nations as corn in a sieve (Amos ix. 9), no successor could substantiate a claim as David's heir.

The Temple could not be laid low until Messiah came, the Prince of Peace. But now, what was about to happen? In that holy place not one stone would be left upon another. It was no longer needed. Daniel's appointed year had arrived in which the oblation should be made to cease (Dan. ix. 27). The promise given to the latter house that it should surpass the glories of Solomon (Hag. ii. 9), was already accomplished. For Him it lingered. Now it might pass away. Already had He denounced its unworthy guardians in the parable of the Vineyard. They who heard it trembled. That parable was their death-warrant. Its terrible prophetic truth must soon let loose the vengeful armies of desolation.

A few years hence, therefore, no Messiah could satisfy the conditions laid down by the word of God; and future generations, though they had not seen the miracles of Jesus, would recognise the only Messiah by the convergence of sacred proofs, which, as they gathered round Himself, found Him without any possible rival.

The old world was passing away: a new world coming. He stood between the two, at once the barrier of demarcation and the link of life. All the history of the past looked forward to Himself. What touched on Him lived on. He gave it an eternal

purpose. All else must die. Nothing had any power of resurrection save through the interests of His own eternal life. All must pass away that was outside of Him. It could not rise. But He Himself would live on as a principle of life in the nations of the future. All would be called by His name and share His Spirit and obey His law. His resurrection opened flood-gates of Divine grace for future peoples. 'As many as will receive Him shall become the sons of God.' The citizenship of the Kingdom of Heaven, which he had preached during His ministry, will begin from now, and all the nations of the world shall manifest in the transformed conditions of social life the regenerating power of His resurrection.

Alas that the people of God did not know the time of their visitation! So, however, had the prophet foretold. 'Israel must abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim' (Hos. iii. 4). While other nations shine with the Light that is come upon them, Israel for a while must be cut off. They who now thronged the Temple courts would in a few years be 'wanderers among the nations' (Hos. ix. 17). They must pay the penalty of rejecting the legislator of the New Covenant whom God had sent to them.

Are they dead? No; there lives a promise for the latter days. Then indeed shall they return and seek the Lord their God and David their king (Hos. iii. 5). Behold all nations bowing down before Him, although Israel stands aloof. The

estrangement is for a time; a reconciliation follows which shall be eternal. As Joseph's brethren bowed down before the brother whom they sold into Egypt, so in the latter days the inhabitants of Jerusalem, gathered from all places of their exile, would look on Him whom they pierced, and would mourn for Him as for an only son, even a firstborn (Zech. xii. 10). The marks in His hands and in His side, by which the Apostles recognised the Lord they loved, would be the abiding guarantee of His identity when He should come and show Himself to the repentant nation.

Never could His work pass away. He had died. This was the death of which He spake as the necessary condition of a nobler everlasting life. Death has henceforth over Him no power. The Word of God is Himself, which liveth and abideth for ever. To Himself the security of the Eternal Word belongs. 'It shall accomplish that which I please, and prosper in the thing whereto I sent it' (Is. lv. 11). Did the prophet put an utterance of seeming despondency into His mouth—'I have spent my strength for nought in vain?' Isaiah had only formulated the despairing cry of natural helplessness in order to emphasise the dignity of the supernatural predestination. 'Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and my God shall be my strength. He said, It is a light thing that Thou shouldst be my servant to raise up the tribes of Israel: I will also give Thee for a light to the Gentiles, that Thou mayest be My salvation to the ends of the earth' (Is. xlix. 5, 6).

Glorious mission of the Apostles! They were heralds of the resurrection. From the womb God had formed His servant as He had formed no other. The Virgin had brought forth a Son (Is. vii. 14). A woman had compassed a man (Jer. xxxiii. 22). The woman's seed, despised by man, abhorred by the nation, a servant under the tyranny of a strange prince (Is. xlix. 7), is risen from the dead, more wondrously begotten now into a more wondrous life. He is risen from the dead to be the glory of Israel and the Prince of the kings of the earth (Rev. i. 5).

O Jesu, all things are changed by Thy resurrection. O let my heart rise up to the fellowship of that Divine joy which Thou hast shed forth upon mankind.

My son, thou shalt indeed find that My glory as it shines on thee gives ever-increasing energy to thy life if thou continuest in My love. Live in the power of My resurrection, for My resurrection in the glory of My Divine nature is the impulse of thy resurrection, while thy human nature abides in the fellowship of grace.

Truly, Lord, Thou hast made all things new, and though we see not yet the fulness of Thy work as it shall be when the new creation is complete, we can praise Thee even now for the powers whereby Thou callest us to freedom from the tyranny of death and sin.

Thou must know My resurrection as changing darkness into light by the dawn of the heavenly day, if thou wilt truly live for Me.

Yea, Lord, even so. Thou hast called me to be amongst the children of the Light. For Thee will I live. O never let me return to the darkness wherein Thy life remains unknown.

2. THE CONSECRATING PASSION.

Our Lord would naturally refer the assembled disciples to those features of the Mosaic record which He had already explained to them before He suffered, but which they in their blindness had been unable to understand.

‘As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up’ (John iii. 14). Christ had already dwelt upon the Cross as the consummation of His work. His disciples must take it up and follow Him. The brazen serpent exhibited Him as being made sin for us. The brass was not of the nature of the serpent, but innocent, though moulded in the serpent’s form. Jesus died as though He were accursed of God. So man regarded Him. So this type exhibited Him: for ‘cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree’ (Deut. xxi. 28; Gal. iii. 13). But there was virtue in that form. The virtue was not of the serpent form, but by the Divine grace; not in the likeness of sinful flesh, but in the power of the Eternal Spirit.

The Paschal Lamb showed forth His crucifixion as the power whereby the people of God should be led out of the Egypt of the world. The lamb must be roasted whole in cruciform manner, symbolising the redemptive oblation upon the Cross which was

offered in the power of the Holy Ghost, the Fire of God's true Presence. Not a bone was to be broken. This had been strictly fulfilled in His own death. The blood was to be sprinkled upon the two sideposts and the upper doorpost of the houses of the Israelites, and the disciples would remember how Jesus had said to them, 'I am the Door.' In that sprinkled blood they must recognise the wounds in His hands, and the bleeding brow which they had witnessed upon the Cross. In the form of the Crucified they must own the Door of Heaven, the true Home of Israel. His body was their home, their sanctuary. Outside of His body all must perish, even though they were born of Israel, victims to the angel of death, having broken God's covenant.

The Passover was a national feast of deliverance from Egypt and of entrance into the wilderness of probation.

There was another great ceremonial of which Jesus may probably have gone on to speak as a witness to Himself. It was the consecration of the people by a covenant with special sacrifices at Sinai. Deliverance from Egypt was not enough. The people were still needing to obtain access to God.

Moses took the blood of calves and of goats, with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book and all the people, saying, This is the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you (Heb. ix. 19, 20; Exod. xxiv. 7, 8). Half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar (Exod. xxiv. 6).

Consider what that altar was. Standing in front of the rock on which the Divine glory was manifested,

it signified the mediatorial presence of the Divine Sonship under human form, raising the worship of man to the dignity of God. The altar was to be made of earth, or if of stone, then at any rate not of hewn stone (Exod. xx. 24, 26). But why was this? It was because Messiah would not be born by human generation. He would be conceived of a virgin by the Holy Ghost, a stone cut out of the mountain without hands, as Daniel describes Him (ii. 45). The blood poured out upon the altar signified His own blood. He, the true Altar, would not receive consecration from without. His own blood must be shed. His people would be cleansed by having virtue communicated from Himself to them. Already had the Twelve been with Him at the sacred feast before He suffered, and had heard Him say, 'This is my Blood of the New Testament which is shed for many for the remission of sins' (Matt. xxvi. 28).

As then there were twelve pillars representing the twelve tribes of Israel at which the elders of Israel did eat and drink, so would the twelvefold Apostolate of the Christian Church take part in the oblation which He Himself had offered. They would feed upon His Body and Blood, and see Himself in the Divine glory, even as the elders saw the God of Israel when there was under His feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of Heaven in his clearness, and they saw God and did eat and drink (Ex. xxiv. 10, 11).

The old covenant was thus sanctified in type of the new, but the first covenant had also a worldly sanctuary, which Moses afterwards erected. This was

itself made after the pattern showed to Moses in the mount. There was therefore a more glorious tabernacle, from which all the virtue of that ancient one was derived. What was this but the Body of Christ, the Church which Messiah was to build in the heavens? (Amos ix. 6). He was about to enter into the heavens that He might appear in the presence of God for man (Heb. ix. 24), and consecrate a new and living way for us into the holiest by His own blood (Heb. x. 19).

The earthly tabernacle needed to be consecrated every year with blood upon the Day of Atonement. That blood was the annual type of His own Blood shed once for all. This bloodshedding and His resurrection were both of them significantly exhibited. On this day of atonement the high priest, clothed merely in white linen, brought the goats. One goat was to be slain and his blood sprinkled upon the mercy-seat within the veil and upon the horns of the altar, and so the sanctuary was to be reconciled, and the body of the goat was to be burnt outside the camp. So had His own blood now been shed, and His body had been offered with the Fire of the Eternal Spirit upon the accursed tree, in order that He might sanctify the Christian Church as a means of access to God, not for one year only, but for ever, so that therein continual sacrifices should be offered upon the Christian altar, even as the daily sacrifices were the outcome of that one sacrifice of annual reconciliation. The other goat was to have all the sins of the people confessed over his head, and was to bear their iniquities into the wilderness into a

land 'cut off.' So had He been 'cut off out of the land of the living' (Is. liii. 18), but He was quickened by the Spirit when He died bearing our sins upon the tree. He had gone alive, the sin-bearer, into the world of death, whither no living soul had gone before Him. Satan had found One over whom death had no power. He bore our sins by the act of death, but He bore them away, for death could have no dominion over Him. How joyously must His people welcome Him on this great Easter Day, the victim by whose blood they were reconciled, the scapegoat whose resurrection was the warrant of a life new and eternal to all His members! (Lev. xvi. 21, 22.)

The linen vestments were the type of the spotless humanity wherein He humbled Himself to die on the Cross. The beautiful garments of the daily ministrations of the sanctuary were the types of the glory in which after His resurrection the merits of His sacrifice should be continually pleaded in His mediatorial kingdom, ~~when these~~ Apostles to whom Jesus spake, having Himself as ~~their~~ High Priest after the order of Melchisedec, with priests ~~and~~ Levites under them gathered from all nations of the world, should plead His sacrifice before God continually.

O Jesu, Thou hast triumphed over death by dying: give me grace to die unto the world, that I may live in Thee with Thine own life.

My son, thou must understand the reality and the dignity of that Covenant wherein I

gather thee unto Myself, that thou mayest partake of My life.

Truly, Lord, Thou art a living Sanctuary for all who will take refuge in Thy Name. Thy blood giveth life to all, new life, eternal life.

My son, if thou wilt truly give thine heart to be henceforth with Me, for ever dead to the world, thou shalt know the abundance of the heavenly life wherein I abide at the right hand of the Father.

O Lord Jesu, I lift up my heart to Thee. Alas that I should ever forget that I belong to Thee! Alas that I should ever think of the wilderness as my home, when Thou hast called me to abide in Thy tabernacle!

8. THE HEAVENLY FOOD.

‘I am the living Bread which came down from Heaven’ (John vi. 51). So our Lord had spoken already. That Heavenly Bread implied the death through which He had passed. How could Jesus give Himself as Bread from heaven unless He ascended thither? How could He ascend unless first He died?

It was on the first day of the week that that Bread had been for the first time given to their forefathers in the wilderness, for on the sixth day following they were to gather their double portion, observing the seventh day as a Sabbath (Ex. xvi. 4, 5). The mixed multitude, however, loathed that gift when sent to them under the government of Moses (Num. xi. 4). Afterwards they all loathed the bread,

speaking of it as a light thing, because it satisfied not their earthly longings (Num. xxi. 5). First the quails were sent to punish their lusting by the very granting of their desire. Then the fiery serpents were sent to punish their murmuring.

So should it happen now. God had given them earthly promises as the quails before the manna. The gift of the manna was preceded by the gift of the quails, flying from a great distance, and wearied so that they were easily caught—a symbol of our Lord's humanity in the weakness of His Passion. The manna is the heavenly food of the resurrection-life. 'In the morning ye shall be filled with bread, and ye shall know that I am the Lord your God' (Ex. xvi. 12; Num. xi. 4, 88).

At the close of a year the mixed multitude complained of the manna, because they could look for nothing else. Then God gave them quails again, so that they ate thereof for a whole month until it became their destruction. Perhaps we may understand by the mixed multitude who thus complained, those whose hearts are not with the Church of God so as to accept with thankfulness God's sacramental gifts. They desire to know Christ after the flesh, and that very knowledge becomes their destruction.

Again did the people speak against God and against Moses, loathing this light bread (Num. xxi. 5). St. Paul speaks of this as 'tempting Christ' (1 Cor. x. 9). Then God punished them with fiery serpents. If we think lightly of the heavenly gift, 'not discerning the Lord's Body,' we must perish in like manner.

That bread whereon they fed in the wilderness

was to be laid up before the Lord, an omer full of manna; 'Aaron laid it up before the testimony, to be kept' (Ex. xvi. 84). So would His body ascend up to heaven, and while He fed the people with Himself during their pilgrimage He would be pleading on their behalf before God.

Nor was the water which they drank less significant of Christ. 'They drank of the spiritual Rock which followed them, and that Rock was Christ' (1 Cor. x. 4). To this Jesus had made allusion: 'If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink' (John vii. 37).

The manna was like dew, a heavenly deposit drawn down to earth by reason of the earth's coldness.¹ Is it not the coldness of man's nature in the dark night of sin which causes the mediatorial love, whereby we are surrounded as by an atmosphere, to vouchsafe this heavenly deposit as soon as the clouds open and the light of His ascended glory begins to shine forth? Without that light there can be no such gift of the heavenly dew. The food which is the gift of the opening day tells of the darkness of the night which was before.

The rock in Holy Scripture is the symbol of the Divine Sonship. From the smitten rock the water came forth. So from the side of Christ is given to us the blood of the Divine Sonship, wherewith our souls are to be refreshed. Rephidim means refreshment.

As the rock was smitten in Horeb at Rephidim,

¹ Vide Sir John Herschel's *Discourse on the Study of Natural Philosophy* (pp. 159-162), and the examination of the causes of dew in Mill's *Logic*.

so afterwards another cliff was smitten in Kadesh. Upon the latter occasion it is curiously stated by the Jerusalem Targum that Moses smote the cliff once, and blood came out: thereupon he smote it again, and there came out water.

The earlier gift of water may be taken as symbolising the gift of grace vouchsafed in typical power to the early Jewish covenant, but failing as the time of the end drew near by reason of the unfaithfulness of the people. The rock gave them water in Horeb, the place of drought. The cliff in Kadesh, the sanctuary, when the people of another generation were gathered together again after the death of their fathers, gave them water anew.¹

The two names are applied to God by the Psalmist: 'Be Thou my stronghold-rock, a fortress-home to save me: for Thou art my cliff and my fortress' (Ps. xxxi. 2, 3).

The water of the Jewish covenant is changed into the wine, the blood of the new covenant.

O Jesu, Thou art the true Bread from Heaven. Thou art the Rock whence we drink the living water. Thou givest us honey out of the Cliff, even the sweetness of Thy Passion, and oil out of the flinty Rock, even the power of Thy Holy Spirit.

¹ This second generation may be taken as representing the people of the Christian era. Moses was to speak to the cliff, and not to smite it. The people of Christ are nourished by the Sacramental Word. Christ died for our deliverance, but the sin of smiting Him kept back the smiters from the promises of the faith.

My son, I give thee My flesh and My blood, that thou mayest have strength for the journey, and I will raise thee up at the last day.

O Jesu, how apt is the worldly heart to murmur by reason of the difficulties of the way! O let my soul be evermore stayed upon Thee. Let me feed on Thee alone, and Thou shalt be my satisfaction.

MEDITATION XXXIX.

Prophecies Fulfilled.

2. THE PROPHETS AND THE PSALMS.

And he said unto them, These are my words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, how that all things must needs be fulfilled, which are written in the law of Moses and the prophets, and the psalms, concerning me.—St. Luke xxiv. 44.

1. THE INFANCY.

OUR Lord's resurrection was, as it were, a new birth. It was not a return to the old life. It was entering upon a new condition of life. It would recall the marvel of His birth at Bethlehem. He was to be born of a virgin. That virgin-birth did not belong to Messiah as a mere marvel. When heathen legends attribute virgin-birth to heathen heroes there is no reason for the thing, no antecedent necessity. That Jesus should be born of a virgin was a necessity, for He was the Son of God. He came to take upon Himself our nature, not subjecting Himself to the power of development inherent in the race, but subjecting the nature of man to His own personality. His personality was Divine, and did not cease to be so when as the Seed of the woman He became the Son of man. He was the Son of mankind, but not of any individual man.

Now He is proclaimed as the Son of God with

power by the resurrection from the dead. The same Divine power whereby He took upon Himself our nature, and came forth from the Virgin's womb to enter upon His life of humiliation, shows itself now in His rising from the dead to enter with our manhood upon His life of glory. As the angel had said, 'That holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God, so the Psalmist had said, 'Thou wilt not suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption (Ps. xvi. 10; Acts ii. 27; xiii. 35).

As His resurrection by the power of His Divinity presupposes this virgin-birth, so the prophecy of His virgin-birth spreads itself forth into the grand manifestation of His Divine life, free from this world, in the glory of the resurrection, that He may be known as Emmanuel (Is. vii. 14).

He is come, then, Emmanuel, of whom God had said that 'Out of Bethlehem shall He come forth unto Me that is to be ruler in Israel' (Mic. v. 2; Matt. ii. 5, 6). He is come who was to be the Bread of Life (John vi. 48), born in the House of Bread.

The star of which Balaam had prophesied (Num. xxiv. 17) had told the distant Magi of His birth (Matt. ii. 2). God had made the wrath of man turn to His glory in that Herod had brought about the fulfilment of prophecy by the slaughter of the babes of Bethlehem. Rachel had been weeping for her children (Jer. xxxi. 15; Matt. ii. 17, 18). Rachel's tomb was in David's birthplace. Ephraim had seemed to die, but He was a dear son still (Jer. xxxi. 20), and the children of Rachel shall come

again to their own border, because 'she which travaileth hath brought forth' the hope of Israel. 'A woman has compassed a man' (Jer. xxxi. 22). Ephraim shall be the firstborn again. He receives Christ when Judah rejects Him. So Zechariah, calling Christ the Bow, says, 'I have filled my Bow with Ephraim,' since the Apostles were from Galilee. (Zech. ix. 13.)

Jesus fled to Egypt. The whole nation came forth out of Egypt as God's firstborn, and perished by reason of their own sin. Now He comes forth out of Egypt who is the true Firstborn, with reference to whom God had said by Hosea, 'Out of Egypt have I called My Son' (Hos. xi. 1; Matt. ii. 15).

But the name whereby He should be known, the name affixed to the Cross, was Jesus of Nazareth. In Nazareth the angel had appeared to Mary. In Nazareth would He grow up, the hidden God, who comes to be Jesus the Saviour. Nazareth is 'the place of the sprout,' and thence would God 'bring forth His Servant the Branch, the Stone which was laid before Joshua the high priest.' This was the stone hewn out of the mountain without hands (Dan. ii. 45), the living corner-stone which the Jewish builders rejected (Ps. cxviii. 22; Matt. xxi. 42; Mark xii. 10, 11; Luke xx. 17; Acts iv. 11; 1 Pet. ii. 7), but which would become the headstone of the corner, and would fill the world (Dan. ii. 35). The seven eyes of the eternal Spirit of God were upon it, and by the wounds of Calvary He was to remove the iniquity of the land in one day (Zech. iii. 9), offering a sacrifice which should never need to be repeated for

the sins of the whole world. This living Stone (1 Pet. ii. 4), this Branch, is He of whom Isaiah writes, 'There shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a sprout shall flourish from his roots, and the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him' (Is. xi. 1, 2).

So He Himself, when He opened His ministry in the synagogue of Galilee, claimed to be the Messiah. He read the words, 'The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me, because the Lord hath anointed Me to preach good tidings unto the meek.' He was 'sent to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord' (Is. lxi. 1, 2), the year of which Daniel had prophesied as the beginning of the seventieth week, during which He was to confirm a covenant with many. 'This day,' said He, 'is this scripture fulfilled in your ears' (Luke iv. 21),

O Jesu, Thou wast content to be born as the child of poverty ; grant that I may never seek the greatness of the world, but rather strive to realise the powers of the world to come, which Thou bringest near to them that seek Thee.

Yea, My son. In poverty thou shalt find Me if thou wilt look to Me. Fear not earthly want, for I will give thee heavenly riches.

O Jesu, blessed be Thy Name. Thou art the portion of mine inheritance. With Thee poverty is rich, and without Thee riches and power are poor and feeble. I desire indeed to be dead to all the things of this present life even while surrounded by them. So let me experience now by grace the power of the life wherein Thou art risen from the dead, that

I may wake up after Thy likeness to the joy of an eternal satisfaction in Thy glory.

2. THE MINISTRY.

At His first ministerial passover they had witnessed the purification of the Temple, when they remembered how it was written, 'The zeal of Thine house hath eaten me up' (Ps. lxi. 9; John ii. 17).

Jesus would point out to them how the light of God had shone forth afterwards by the way of the sea beyond Jordan, in Galilee of the nations, according to the words of Isaiah (Is. ix. 1, 2).

In the ministry of healing He had shown Himself triumphant over man's infirmity. He had borne man's griefs and carried his sorrows (Is. liii. 4; Matt. viii. 17), being Himself superior to them all. In the sympathy of His humanity He humbled Himself to feel, and in the power of His Godhead He showed Himself able to remove them. His knees were weak through fasting (Ps. cix. 24). He wept (John xi. 35) and chastened Himself with fasting (Ps. lxi. 10), but the outward weakness was only the instrument of an exhaustless strength dwelling within. He drank of the brook in the way (Ps. cx. 7). The power thus clothed with man's infirmity, formerly shown in raising others, now shines forth in the lifting up of His own head. He is risen from the dead as the Sun of Righteousness (Mal. iv. 2), calling mankind to a better health than had ever radiated from the touch of His earthly form while here below.

The people had many misapprehensions as to

Messiah, but they rightly expected Him to work many wonders. Yet the miracles of Jesus amazed them. They had asked, could Christ do more miracles than those which this man had done (John vii. 81). To these signs He had already pointed the disciples of John the Baptist: 'Go and show John again those things which ye do hear and see: the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them' (Matt. xi. 5).

Yet these miracles were to be associated with many tokens of weakness. The weakness of the outward nature of man was not destroyed by the power of the indwelling nature of God. Messiah was to be 'for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem' (Is. viii. 14); and therefore Jesus added the warning, 'Blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in Me.'

The Jews could not see the Godhead shining through the manhood, although they saw the lustre of the life of marvel round about Him. How was it? Does not that lustre of Divine love free Him from all weakness? They thought it should. They did not see through the veil of flesh how the Divine presence streamed forth in these marvels because it was inherent within Him. They saw not that the merit of His life rose in dignity proportionately to the humiliations and sufferings which He endured. They saw not that the climax of manifestation was in a triumph by death,—'The Son of man must be lifted

up,'—because, as they said, 'Christ abideth ever' (John xii. 34). Only by dying could He show Himself triumphant over death, quickened by the Spirit, capable of rising in glory. 'He had power to lay down His life, and to take it again.'

The prophet had foretold the rejection of His teaching as a result of the carnal depravity of the nation. 'Go and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes, lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed' (Is. vi. 10; Matt. xiii. 14, 15).

The acceptable year of the Lord was to be also a day of vengeance (Is. xli. 2). The people clamoured for the day of the Lord, but that day was to be darkness, and not light (Amos v. 18).

John had been sent to prepare the way for Him. The witness of John was not only the attestation which prophecy had announced. It had a real moral purpose. Truly God was acting in love when He sent the voice crying in the wilderness (Is. xl. 3; Mal. iv. 4, 5), that all who would give heed to him might be able to recognise and obey the solemn, self-asserting claim of the incarnate God.

He Himself had veiled His teaching in the form of parables when He addressed the multitudes. So the Psalmist had said, 'I will open my mouth in a parable' (or analogy) (Ps. lxxviii. 2; Matt. xiii. 35).

This was the true law of a religious teacher, to develop the philosophy of history as the Psalmist had

done, and the laws of nature as Christ did in His parables. The teaching of analogy would show how history and nature culminate in the manifestation of Christ. Those who have patience thus to read beneath the surface of daily phenomena will see the unity of God's government in nature and grace. What is the course of nature but a continual succession of life and death? Nature's brief resurrections culminate in Christ, the Eternal.

It was in love that He taught principles rather than open truths. The listeners would recoil, had He spoken the plain truth. He in His meekness would not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax. It seemed, indeed, as if it were of no use to speak to Jerusalem fallen so low, but some there were who would thus be led to hear. At length He would bring forth judgment unto truth. He would manifest the power of the Anointing Spirit on the coming day of Pentecost, and the Gentiles should be quickened by the flame when Israel felt it no more (Is. xlii. 1-4; Matt. xii. 17-21).

O Jesu, who didst minister amongst men, doing the mighty works of God, but suffering the scorn of Thy people; help me to endure the shame while acting for Thee. Strengthen me with Thine indwelling power, that I may always rely upon Thee.

© *My son, look thou to Me, and I will never fail to work with thee. Thy weakness shall call forth My strength if thou art true to Me.*

O Lord Jesu, never let me turn aside from Thee.

Teach me how I may rest in Thee with constant trust, and love Thee more and more.

3. THE PASSION.

How little had the disciples understood what they were doing a few days ago, when they took part in the triumphal entry of Jesus as the King foretold, meek and lowly and sitting upon an ass ! (Zech. ix. 9 ; Matt. xxi. 4, 5 ; John xii. 14, 15).

He had gone to the Temple. God's House of Prayer could not rightly be restricted to the Jewish possessors. It was the centre of blessing whereunto 'all people' should be gathered (Is. lvi. 7). He had warned those who made it their own house that they were justifying the prophet's indignation—'Is this house, which is called by My name, become a den of robbers in your eyes ?' (Jer. vii. 11 ; Matt. xxi. 13 ; Mark xi. 17 ; Luke xix. 46). As Shiloh had come under the curse, so must the house which they had profaned. There was another House which He would build in three days, of which He had told them long before (John ii. 20, 21). That was 'the sure house in which the faithful priest should walk before God's Anointed for ever' (1 Sam. ii. 35).

By the children in the Temple God had perfected praise, while they welcomed Jesus as Messiah (Ps. viii. 3 ; Matt. xxi. 16).

He had come into that Temple suddenly as the prophet foretold (Mal. iii. 1). But that prophet asked, Who may abide the day of His coming ? even as Isaiah had asked, Who hath believed our

report? (liii. 1; John xii. 88; Rom. x. 16). That was not the temple in which David's priestly Heir and Lord should minister. The Priest after the order of Melchisedec must sit at God's right hand (Ps. cx. 1), gathering all the nations of the world as priests and Levites into a Church Catholic (Is. lxvi. 21), against which the gates of hell should not prevail.

The Apostles had seen what part the Jews had taken in the fulfilment of the prophecies respecting Him. Alas! they themselves had been equally changeable. They found their company already broken. One of themselves was the familiar friend which did eat of the King's bread, but lifted up his heel against Him (Ps. xli. 10; John xiii. 18). Judas had sold Him for the predicted thirty pieces of silver (Zech. xi. 12; Matt. xxvii. 9, 10). What had the rest of them done? 'The Shepherd was smitten, and the sheep were scattered' (Zech. xiii. 7; Matt. xxvi. 81; Mark xiv. 27). They all forsook Him, and fled. The false witnesses were not wanting (Ps. xxvii. 12) when Herod and Pontius Pilate with the Gentiles and the people of Israel were gathered together (Acts iv. 27). The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers had taken counsel together against Him (Ps. ii. 2); but as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He opened not His mouth (Is. liii. 7). He was suffering in filial obedience. 'The Lord hath opened Mine ears, and I was not rebellious. I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair; I hid not my face from shame and spitting (Is. l. 5, 6). In Him all the sorrows of the Psalmist were fulfilled.

Many rose up against Him, but now the Lord has lifted up His head by resurrection on the third day, as the third Psalm announced (Ps. iii. 3, 4). David's exaltation to the throne on Zion was a type of what the Apostles now beheld.

The deep wail of Ps. xxii. found at last in Jesus One who could use the words in the very fulness of their meaning. Upon the Cross he cried, 'My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?' (Ps. xxii. 1; Matt. xxvii. 46). Adder's poison was under their lips as they falsely accused Him (Ps. cxl. 3). As a lion greedy of His prey (Ps. xvii. 12) they had seized upon His hands and His feet, nailing them to the Cross. The soldiers had parted His garments amongst them, and cast lots upon His vesture (Ps. xxii. 19; John xix. 24). They had given Him the gall and the vinegar (Ps. lxix. 21).

He was numbered amongst the transgressors, being crucified between two thieves (Is. liii. 12; Luke xxii. 37); but He was with the rich in His death (Is. liii. 9), and even as He hung upon the Cross the protecting care of God caused that the prophecy should be accurately fulfilled, 'Not a bone of Him shall be broken' (Ex. xii. 46; Ps. xxxiv. 20; John xix. 36). He hung, the object of wonder, upon the Cross, to all around. The soldier's wound in His side, made in that hour of death, now in His resurrection testifies of the glory of His love. It is the wound which shall call Judah eventually to penitence, according to the words spoken in His name by Zechariah—'They shall look on Me whom they pierced' (Zech. xii. 10; John xix. 37).

And now the glory is His which David foresaw. God has delivered Him from the mouth of the lion (Ps. xxii. 21). Through Him, the risen Christ, a mighty seed shall become the sons of God, being born of the Spirit. The sound of His triumph shall spread from that secret chamber throughout all place and time, yea, through eternity. They who are 'accounted unto the Lord for a generation' by this birth of the Spirit shall ever be declaring His righteousness to them that shall be born, for He hath wrought it to the full.

The body which is risen from the dead shall be offered in the never-dying virtue of the Passion before God. God had no pleasure in the sacrifices of old time, but the obedient ear (Ps. xl. 6), the broken heart (Ps. li. 17), of him in whose inward parts God found His perfect truth (Ps. li. 6) shall be acceptable. Jerusalem shall be built as the true Hephzibah, the Lamb's Bride; and God shall be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, in which the glory of the resurrection shall shine out unceasingly (Ps. li. 19).

The type of Jonah finds itself accomplished in His resurrection, and His Church must go forth and proclaim the approaching overthrow of the world. That final doom may be delayed, but not for ever. Zion shall be redeemed with judgment, and her converts with righteousness, and the destruction of the transgressors and of the sinners shall be together; and they that forsake the Lord shall be consumed (Is. i. 27, 28).

O Lord Jesu, Thou from the beginning hast contemplated Thy Passion and by Thy holy prophets hast revealed it to Thy chosen, grant that I may look forward to suffering with holy confidence, not shrinking from anything whereby I may be conformed to Thine image or advance Thy glory.

Yea, My son, if thou wouldst be like to Me thou must expect much suffering of many kinds. Fear not then to suffer, for I have suffered before thee and I will help thee.

Surely Thou, O Lord, art a very present help in time of trouble, and they who suffer according to Thy will shall surely find that Thou wilt deliver them from their distress.

My word shall never fail. Only do thou cling to Me. Let not any trouble make thee loose thine hold of Me as if I had forgotten thee. Rather do I suffer thee to be overwhelmed, that thou mayest cling to Me the more closely and mayest experience the mightiness of My power for thy deliverance.

O Lord, great is Thy power, for Thou hast created all, and great Thy love who hast redeemed all. O let me rise to the demands of Thy wisdom, that I may learn Thy power in the glory of the new creation and may rejoice in Thy love according to the eternity of Thy Divine truth.

MEDITATION XL.

The Understanding Opened.

Then opened he their mind, that they might understand the scriptures; and he said unto them, Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer, and rise again from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name unto all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. Ye are witnesses of these things.—St. Luke xxiv. 45-48.

1. SPIRITUAL INSIGHT.

JESUS had already taught His disciples out of the books of Moses and the prophets, but the words had failed to convey any true meaning. The word of God needs to be received in the power of the same Spirit whereby it was spoken. For want of this the plainest teaching fails of bringing conviction to the heart.

Alas! how apt are we to forget this! We think that we can prove Divine truths so as to enforce them upon others by the clearness of our own explanations and arguments; but those to whom we speak constantly fail of recognising the force of the words. The words cannot be apprehended save by a spiritual power. 'He that loveth not knoweth not God;' and it is only those who are under the teaching of the Spirit of love who can accept Divine truth in its fulness.

Intellectual acceptance of Divine truth is not the preliminary, but the concomitant condition of Divine

life. The eye is not healthy because it sees, but it sees because it is in health. The soul is not quickened with the powers of the new birth because it accepts the letter of the Christian creed, but it cannot exercise those powers unless it be in a state to perceive those supernatural verities.

The acceptance of the Catholic faith is necessary not merely as an act of outward obedience, because it is authoritatively taught, but as the essence of spiritual fellowship. In the creeds the Church sets before us what those objects are which the spiritual vision must delight to contemplate unless we would use the sacred gift of Divine life perversely.

It would indeed be of no use to us that we should have ever so able a teacher, having the fullest sense of our necessities, and perfectly infallible in his own utterances, unless we had the Spirit of truth within us which should enable us to profit by his teaching. Though our Lord Himself were with us, ready at hand to solve every controversial difficulty as it arose, we should be none the better unless we had the supernatural capacity by which His words should be accepted in our inmost selves.

The Church is 'the pillar and ground of the truth,' not merely as an external guardian of orthodoxy, but as a living instrument whereby the Spirit of Truth is operative in men's hearts and consciences. The truth is maintained from age to age not so much by the continual enunciation of formularies by which the statements of error are set aside, as by the cultivation of spiritual power in those who have the love of the truth so that they may be saved. The Spirit necessi-

tates the victory of the letter, although it may be after long-protracted struggles and seemingly hopeless overthrow, but the letter does not produce the energy of the Spirit. Indeed, where the letter is maintained as self-sufficient, and the life of the Spirit is ignored, it may harden the very organs of spiritual action, which ought to gain a tender sensitiveness by reason of the Spirit of Truth and Love. So it was with the Jews in their eagerness to maintain the old law. So it is continually amidst the controversies of Christians.

The mere intellectual perception of truth is like the perception of form by those who are colour-blind. Without the Spirit of Love the higher meaning and relationship of the things spoken is lost. Their heavenly purpose can only be known as the Sun of Righteousness shines forth upon them. This brightness wakens such variety of tint, that all the landscape lives and smiles with supernatural joy in the lustrous harmony of Divine love.

Therefore does our Lord appeal to 'him that hath an ear,' that he may 'hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches' (Rev. ii. 7). Without that supernatural ear we listen in vain.

We are not to think that on this account we may be indifferent to truth, as though our nature's blindness made us irresponsible. It is not so. God gives His Holy Spirit to them that ask Him. We must ask, and it shall be given to us. 'He who searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit' (Rom. viii. 27). If we meet God with the demands of our carnal intellect we never shall obtain an answer,

but if we yield ourselves to Him in filial confidence He will certainly lead us onward.

We must remember that we cannot judge of truth by the supposed excellence of persons who hold any given set of opinions, for we can only form an estimate of natural goodness. We cannot judge truly as to the relationship of the heart to God. God does know what that relationship is, and according to the sincerity of heart, the purity of the whole spiritual aim, will be His disclosure of Divine truth to each as He opens his understanding that he may understand His words. Mysteries are revealed to the meek. 'Blessed are the pure in heart : for they shall see God' (St. Matt. v. 8). So our Lord said to His disciples, 'It is given to you to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven, but to them it is not given' (St. Matt. xiii. 11). The gift was not one of partiality but of discrimination. So must it ever be. So in the very case of the Apostles, the gift as given before our Lord's death needed to be used in order that they who had received it might receive the further gift of illumination after His resurrection. It was a token of their right use of that which they had in their time of natural ignorance, that they were now rewarded by this further exercise of Divine power to teach them, when our Lord 'opened their understanding that they might understand the Scriptures.'

O Jesu, I am blind by nature. Do Thou of Thy goodness open the eyes of my understanding, that I may attain to know the mysteries of Thy revelation.

My son, though thou hadst all understanding, yet should it profit thee nothing unless thou hadst true love reigning in thy heart. Seek for that love, and act in it; so shall understanding be given thee.

Lord, I desire not to be as those who seeing see not, and hearing hear not. I desire such a gift of understanding as shall enable me to keep Thy law, yea, with my whole heart; for indeed knowledge without love is a more deadly ignorance than any darkness can be which is of nature alone.

Yea, My son, walk in the light, that thou mayest be a true child of the light.

Oh! let me follow Thee, dear Lord; and as I follow Thee let Thy light shine out ever more and more before me, to be my guide and to strengthen me, that I may follow Thee more closely.

He that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the Light of Life. Look to Me, then, and thou shalt be saved. Consider not only that which I do, but Myself, the Doer. Thy footsteps are upon earth, but thine heart must be with Me in the heavenly glory of My resurrection if thou wouldst truly know Me and follow Me.

So do I desire, dear Lord, to lift up my heart unto Thee. The things of earth come to an end, but Thy commandment knoweth no end, save in the infinity of Thy Divine glory, whence also is derived the impulse of Thy love.

2. THE WORLD-WIDE MISSION.

The death and resurrection of Christ had accomplished those details of prophecy which belonged to Himself as a person. Henceforth begins a new era of prophetic development, by which it shall indeed be shown that the Seed of the woman has bruised the serpent's head (Gen. iii. 15). All nations of the world must be blessed through Him (Gen. xii. 3).

The Jews had rejected Christ, because the promise made to Abraham was narrowed by their interpretation to serve the purpose of their own aggrandisement. The Seed of Abraham was to be a blessing to all nations of the world by what He should do for all nations. His glory as the Heir of the world would not consist in the homage which all the world would bring to Him, but in the life which all the world would receive from Him. The blessing of Abraham would come upon the Gentiles through Jesus Christ, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith (Gal. iii. 14). The Samaritans had less knowledge of Christ than the Jews possessed. They had, however, a truer conception of the purpose of His coming, just because they were less immediately concerned in its development. His coming was the immediate glory of His people Israel, and Israel in the dazzling splendour of that consciousness saw not what should be its issue. The Samaritans were outside of this experience, and cherished the wider expectation. Thus they recognised the true office of the Saviour of the world (John iv. 42).

However, the hope of world-wide benediction was attached to every renewed prophecy of Messiah. The Divine benediction rested upon the sacrifice of Isaac with the assurance that in the chosen seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed. Jacob in dying predicts the future of all his sons, but hands on the Messianic benediction to Judah alone. He does not, however, give it to him as an individualising prerogative, but as the foundation of a centralising power. To the power of the coming Shiloh shall the gathering of the people be (Gen. xlix. 10). Moses gave Israel a law by which they were to be shut off from all nations, fenced in thereby until the coming of Christ; but he concludes his dying song with the invitation to all the world, 'Rejoice, O ye nations, with His people;' or more literally according to the Hebrew, 'Rejoice, ye Gentiles, (as) His people' (Deut. xxxii. 43). Their ingathering was represented by Moses in words like those in which St. Paul afterwards described the fact. 'The casting away of Israel was to be the reconciling of the world,' for the invitation to the Gentiles that they should claim these prerogatives is a result of the vengeance of God upon those who had forfeited these prerogatives by their abuse. The Gentiles are become the people of God because God has avenged the blood of His servants, and will render vengeance to His adversaries; but He makes atonement for His land, His people. His own receive Him not: those who were not His own shall become the sons of God.

If Moses, the promulgator of the Old Testament, predicts its transference from an unfaithful progeny

to the nations of the world, David, the founder of the Messianic kingdom, rejoices equally to see His kingdom extending to all nations. The throne, however, to which He looked forward was not to be erected in the earthly city. 'His foundations are upon the holy hills' (Ps. lxxxvii. 1). The gold of Arabia shall be given Him, but prayer shall be made to Him continually as a Divine Person, and daily shall He be blessed (Ps. lxxix. 15). His kingdom spreads beyond the limits of earth, for 'He has redeemed the souls of His people from falsehood and wrong, and their blood is dear in His sight' (Ps. lxxii. 14). Thus does the culminating aspiration of the royal Psalmist agree with the final utterances of the original legislator in combining the extension of the kingdom with a vengeance upon those who were guilty of the bloodshedding. Our Lord had already declared how 'upon this generation should come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth' (Matt. xxiii. 35). Yet would this vengeance be the initiation of a wider sovereignty, a spiritual kingdom in which the hopes of ancient times should find their completeness.

St. Paul has set before us the teaching of Isaiah and of Hosea with reference to the extension of the kingdom of Christ throughout the Gentile world. We may well reflect how our blessed Lord, in this first interview with His Apostles, would point them onward to the predictions of that glorious extension of the covenant which would take its rise from His grave. The promises to Zion were not to fail because Israel had rejected the message. 'The Lord hath made bare His holy arm in the sight of all nations,

and all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God ' ¹ (Is. lii. 10).

The kingdom of David was to be an eternal kingdom, surpassing the limits of temporal duration and of earthly bound. All nations should be gathered into it, and the living and the dead should both of them alike acknowledge its power.

The covenant of the everlasting priesthood should be made sure to the High Priest after the order of Melchisedec. The ancient Jerusalem was to expand in the new life of her king, and the ministries of the old temple were to be perpetuated in a new form of living power which should utterly surpass the limits of restoration effected by Ezra and Nehemiah, and the primeval glory of Solomon's temple. The Apostles might take to themselves the comfort of Isaiah's assurance, ' Your brethren that hated you, that cast you out for My Name's sake, said, Let the Lord be glorified; but He shall appear to your joy, and they shall be ashamed ' (Is. lxvi. 5). Yea, He hath appeared, and He makes sure to them the promise of a priesthood better than that whose Sadducean unbelief had wrought for His death. ' I will take ' of all nations of the earth ' for priests and for Levites, saith the Lord. For as the new heavens and the new earth which I will make shall remain before Me, saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain ' (Is. lxvi. 21, 22). Thus would our Lord claim for Himself the promise of the world-wide empire which should grow around His priestly

¹ ' The salvation of our God ' in Hebrew = 888 (*cf.* Ps. xcvi. 3); = ' Jesus ' in Greek.

throne. 'Instead of thy fathers thou shalt have children, whom thou mayest make princes in all lands' (Ps. xlv. 16).

O Jesu, blessed be Thy name, who hast called us from all nations to rejoice in the covenant of Thy grace.

Take heed, My son, that thou neglect it not. Great are the gifts of the new covenant, and great is the holiness which I require of those to whom such gifts are given.

O Lord Jesu, I look to Thee to enable me to walk worthy of the calling wherewith Thou hast called me. Alas that any should presume upon Thy bounty to dishonour Thy name! Alas that I should be so negligent of that which I have so often professed before! Surely every correction of Thy love, and every act of my submission, will rise up against me unless I walk before Thee in its truth.

Yea, My son, I spared not them of old who let themselves become blind to My glory. Thou must ever be watchful, lest blindness in like manner happen to thee. They thought they saw, and thus they lost their hold on what I gave them. Thou must hold fast the eternal life which I have given thee, lest thou perish after the same example of unbelief.

O Lord, I look to Thee to keep me safe. As Thou hast called me into Thy kingdom, and bidden me to share Thy priesthood, and blest me with a holy vocation in separation from the world, hide me in Thine own tabernacle from all assaults of the evil one.

O let Thy name be to me a tower of safety, wherein I may lie hidden until all the struggles of this evil time be overpast.

3. APOSTOLICAL WITNESS.

Jesus opened their understandings. They must welcome the promises. The sufferings were to issue in glory as predicted, for they had happened in accordance with predictions whose fulfilment could not stop short halfway.

A covenanted people were to be called into existence from all the nations of the world. The old Jerusalem was to pass away, but a new Jerusalem, more glorious far, was to spring into being, deriving life from Himself as her foundation stone. This living stone would become a great mountain and fill the whole earth (Dan. ii. 35).

There must be a shaking of all nations. 'For three transgressions of Judah, and for four' there must be a visitation of judgment now even more terrible than was of old (Amos ii. 4); but in the midst of the shaking that which cannot be shaken shall remain. God had said that in that shaking He would take Zerubbabel and make him as a signet; 'for I have chosen thee, saith the Lord of Hosts' (Hag. ii. 23). That promise shall now be fulfilled. The presence of the risen Saviour shall be the strength of the apostolic band, and they shall call into existence a new heaven and a new earth by the ministry which is entrusted to them, and old things shall pass away.

How little did the Apostles apprehend the force of the words when our Lord told them that they should be ' witnesses of these things ' ! In the midst of their astonishment as they contemplated the risen body of their Master, yet they could not realise what a turning-point in the history of the world His resurrection was.

The heaven of the Divine covenant with Israel had been shaken. The earth of Rome's world-wide empire had been shaken. They were to be witnesses to all nations of the work which had been done so secretly, and all the powers of the earth would give way before their message as the mountain became a plain before Zerubbabel (Zech. iv. 9).

The word of the Lord should go forth from Jerusalem (Mic. iv. 2), and they themselves should be as arrows from the bow of Judah sent forth to bring low the philosophy of Greece as well as the tyranny of Rome (Zech. ix. 13).

As the words were spoken to them amidst their fears while the doors were closed, how little would they understand that their word should accomplish a revolution without parallel in the annals of the globe ! Jesus had already taught them in the parables of the mustard seed and of the leaven how great, how sudden should be the development of the kingdom of Heaven, beginning as it did from an impulse so hidden and apparently circumscribed in its operation. Nevertheless, the sound thereof would ring on with their preaching to the ends of the world, for it was the Word of the Lord, of whose resurrection from the dead they would have to tell. ' As soon as Zion travailed

she brought forth her children ' (Is. lxvi. 8). Jesus told them of the travail pangs which would be their portion in the exercise of their ministry, but the suddenness of their glory, when 'the earth should be made to bring forth in a day, and the nation of the redeemed should be born at once,' was what they could not know, even though their understandings were opened by the Spirit's power.

O Jesu, how little do I know what Thou hast in store for me! Make me then to trust Thee with the simplicity of a perfect devotion, that in doing what Thou givest me to do I may experience Thy power accomplishing through me Thy glorious will.

⑥ *My son, go forth to do My bidding with perfect confidence that I will never fail thee. I spoke by Mine Apostles, and all the world has felt the shaking of the voice. That voice can never be quelled. All the powers of the world must give way before it.*

O Jesu, let me exert the ministry which Thou hast given me in the consciousness of Thy Divine power. Let Thy word shake not only the world around me, but the stubborn fortress of my own natural heart. Thy word destroys the strongholds of death. Thy word communicates the energies of life. Thou hast called me to be a witness of Thy truth upon the earth. Make me to behold Thy glory in the heavens.

MEDITATION XLI.

Joy in the Sight of Jesus.

The disciples therefore were glad when they saw the Lord.—St. John xx. 20.

1. THE JOY OF THE DISCIPLES.

GREAT had been their sorrow while Jesus was lost to sight. Again He appears in the midst of them. They could not believe what others said. It seemed too good for them to believe, even though their own eyes were witness. They must experience many a struggle in their hearts before they can accept in simple truth so great a joy. The heart becomes paralysed, the lips are dumb, the reason stupefied in the first outburst of so great a joy. Words cannot utter so sublime a joy. It is a joy which only the Word of God in the power of the Holy Ghost can express, for the Incarnate Word, risen from the dead in the power of the Eternal Spirit of Life and Love, is the very substance of this joy.

This joy is an undying joy. He that was dead is alive for evermore. We ought to feel this joy as the Apostles felt it on the first day of its manifestation. It is true life to know this joy. It is death to fail of it.

The sight of Jesus manifested in the power of the

Holy Ghost fills the natural heart with fear, but when He has spoken the word of peace and opened the understanding to the knowledge of His truth, then joy is full.

To see the risen Jesus is to know that sorrow is ended for ever. Sorrow has died in His empty grave. The joy of another world has dawned. Jesus is present with His disciples in triumphant joy. His joy is theirs. Stupendous joy! Not the mere meeting again with one whom they thought to be lost. Him whom they see they had known in sorrow which had no sorrow like to it. Now He has conquered. He has attained the reward which made Him even despise the Cross and endure the shame.

Past sorrows are the measure of present joy. As the sorrow was unequalled so must the joy which has dispelled it be peerless too. By that sorrow joy has triumphed. Joy shines out as its reward. The body of Jesus bears the marks of that sorrow. Those marks are to the faithful eye the pledge of perfect victory. The marks of sorrow borne in weakness remain upon the weak body which has been perfected in strength, for by the wounds which those marks attest, the infinite power which underlay that weakness has been developed into manifestation, and in the consciousness of that which He has done He experiences within Himself, He exhibits before all creation, He pleads before God, the Divine merit, the exuberant majesty of life, whereby the victory over sin and death was won. Not an element of weakness was there in the Passion which does not live on as a form of joyous brilliancy in the risen body of Jesus.

The sorrow proved His love, for the sorrow which He came to share was theirs. He clothed Himself with sorrow for their sakes. The joy reveals the power of His love. He has the joy within Himself. It is His very life. He calls them round about Himself that they may share it. They share it not with Him save by receiving it from Him. In His presence is the fulness of joy. The glow of His countenance burns into the heart of the faithful as they gaze upon Him with the joyous fire of the Divine love.

This fire of the Divine love ought to fill us with joy, but if we would know this joy we must abide in the presence of Jesus.

There is no dazzling splendour as that with which the face of Moses shone. The people were afraid to look upon that light. As Jesus shows Himself there is nothing unearthly in the appearance. It is the reality which is unearthly, and therefore no earthly eye can see Him. He shows Himself only to His chosen ones. That form communicates a joy to the heart of them that see Him which no outward splendour could equal.

As they see Him they are gladdened. There is no token of estrangement. He appears and vanishes as a spirit, but His spiritual glory removes Him not from the simplicity of affection which characterised all earlier intercourse. They feel themselves raised into the fellowship of His dignity by His condescension. He Himself suffers no loss.

The barrier of death separates the present mode of His existence from all earthly life, but as He manifests Himself to them the embrace of His love



makes them feel the spiritual unity in which they lingering still upon the earth are bound to Him in His resurrection. He is passed away from earth, but not from them. Whatever sorrows come He will be near. He finds His joy complete in giving joy to them.

O Jesu, when I see Thee I rejoice, but alas, how imperfect is that sight and how scanty is that joy. Alas ! the joys of earth fill my soul, and therefore I cannot see Thee nor rejoice in Thee.

My son, I have called thee into Religion that, being dead to the world, thou mightest live the more truly in this joy.

O Jesu, Thy glory is rest, giving repose to all that trust in Thee.

Verily, My son, when thou dost rest in Me thou dost attain the end for which I created thee. Repine not because I am far from thee, but call Me near unto thyself that thou mayest rejoice in Me.

O Jesu, Thou art my joy. Long since had I perished in the misery of my sin if I had not found the upspringing of eternal delight in Thine unwearied freshness. O Jesu, evermore the same in changeless joy, in every sorrow I would flee to Thee, and joy can know no end unless I fall from Thee.

2. LOOKING TO JESUS.

As with those disciples, so with us. Our joy is that Jesus is near.

We see Him not, but we are none the less to feel Him truly near. We must be looking to Him. We do not depend upon manifestations for the conviction of His nearness ; His word is enough. He appeared to His disciples and vanished from their sight. He showed that He might be close at hand although they saw Him not. This lesson He would have His people cherish for all future time. Near to us, though unseen, He would have us rejoice not in the possibility of temporary apparition but in the certainty of an abiding relationship. The heart recognises the substantial reality of that which is invisible. Jesus is near. If nature is so blind as not to see Him, the blindness is but a fresh ground of appeal to awaken the fuller operation of His love.

The heart looks to Jesus by acknowledging His sovereignty. That vision fills the soul with peace and joy. 'The Lord reigneth.' The Messianic triumph song of the Psalter lives on in the heart of all the faithful. Whatever troubles there may be round about, the joy of beholding Him upon His throne gives peace.

We must be looking to Him as our example, our guide, our teacher. The natural heart finds itself embarrassed. Jesus calls us to follow Him, and the way in which He leads is the way of the holy Cross,

but it shines brightly with the glory of the resurrection which that Cross guarantees.

We look to Jesus and we behold Him as our ransom. He has paid the penalty and conquered the enemy. In His security we feel ourselves secure. He has called us to be perfectly one with Himself. The life which in Him has triumphed over death ensures our victory and makes us feel His glory as being even now our own.

We look to Jesus as the source of holiness, so that what He has done we feel ourselves able to do. Our very weakness hinders not. We act in His strength, not in our own. His wisdom, His strength, His love, are all of them our portion in Himself. While we behold Him standing in the midst of us we know that we cannot fail.

Our hearts are sad : we pine while Jesus is far from sight. One moment of His presence ! Immediately all things shine with bright joy, and faith which lays hold upon Him grasps in Him the substance of all hopes.

Surely we must be glad when we see the Lord.

O Jesu, open mine eyes that I may see Thee, and let my heart exult in the vision of peace.

My son, if thou seest Me not, look till thou seest Me. Though I be unseen by thee I am very near thee. Thine eye needs to be accustomed to the exercises of faith. In due time thou shalt see. Persevere. The vision will become brighter and brighter. Long periods of vacancy and darkness will be abundantly repaid. Fear!

in proportion to the darkness through which thou hast persevered shall be the brightness wherein thou shalt be glorified.

O Lord, I rely wholly upon Thee. If I hear Thy voice of encouragement I am content that the darkness may be deep and long-continued. Thou makest the light to shine in the darkness, and when the darkness is past the light shall shine on for ever and ever.

3. HOW WE ARE TO SEE JESUS.

We must not look to see Jesus in the ways of natural expectation. His presence is not of this world. The worldly heart cannot anticipate the modes in which He will work. We dwarf the channels of His approach by endeavouring to mark out beforehand in what ways He will come.

We must not think that human wisdom will enable us to see Him. We cannot lay down the conditions of His manifestation.

It is the eye of love which perceives the presence of Jesus. We must be constantly watching for Him, content even though we do not seem to find Him, patient amidst the discipline which He appoints.

The eye of love will never be forgetful of the object for which it waits. In everything it perceives His presence, and the manifold veils of earthly form beneath which it is conscious of His approach serve but to show forth the varied fulness of His being. They are divers one from another, but in all of them He is glorified. Their multiplicity suits our imper-

fection while it makes known the perfection which is in Him.

We must not be satisfied with any one of the ways whereby Jesus is to be found. We must seek Him in all the ways by which He approaches us. He who comes is complete in all: but we who receive fail to receive Him truly in those ways in which we seek Him, because we seek Him not also in those other ways which are essential to our obtaining a real grasp of His spiritual glory.

At all times and in all places we must be seeking Him. We fail to see Him if we think there is any place where He cannot be seen. He is seen, not because circumstances are favourable, but because He shows Himself. He shows Himself wherever He wills to those who look to Him with love.

If we would see Jesus we must rejoice to see Him. If the sight of Jesus does not fill the soul with joy it dies away. Jesus lives in joy; joy is the atmosphere wherein He lives. Whether it be on high above the angels or on earth amidst the discipline of man, He cannot live where joy is not. He does not need joy that He may have life, but the very communication of His life is joy. Joy spreads around Him. He decketh Himself with light as with a garment. If we would see Jesus we must come to Him with hearts prepared to welcome the joy which He sheds forth. The darkness of our hearts hinders not our sight of Jesus, for Jesus brings the light wherein Himself is seen. While we strive to see Him by the light of our own understanding we see Him not at all. In our own darkness we droop and

faint. Dark as we are, we must give ourselves up to Him. His light will flow around us with a joyous power, and He will give Himself to view, transforming us into His own likeness of light, and joy, and love.

O Jesu, help me to see Thee. Train my heart amidst the things of earth to behold Thy glory in the heavens.

My son, I do all that is possible to train thee. Only rebel not at My discipline. Look unto Me, and as thou rejoicest more and more in Me thou shalt see Me more and more.

O Jesu, how foolish am I, how ungrateful to seek for joy in anything but Thee. Shine out upon my soul, shine out, dear Lord. Bring me to the satisfaction of being like to Thee, that I may experience the sweetness of that love whereby that likeness is perfected.

MEDITATION XLII.

The Heavenly Commission.

And behold, I send forth the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city, until ye be clothed with power from on high.—St. Luke xxiv. 49.

1. THE PROMISE OF THE FATHER.

JESUS has opened the understanding of the Apostles. Now it is plain to them that their work is to be a real extension of the work of Christ, their life an extension of His Life. The fogs of prejudice have been lifted away, which hung aforetime over all the landscape beyond the narrow limits of their Jewish surroundings. They see the whole world illuminated with the bright rays of Divine Love. They have to go forth bearing the law from Mount Zion (Is. ii. 3) in the lustre of a life which glows with Divine virtues even as Moses came down from the Mount with a glory streaming from his outer countenance. That was an external display. With them there is to be an interior glory. The king's daughter is all glorious within, and this interior glory makes her clothing to be as of wrought gold. The inherent glory of Christ shines through the vestment that is around Him. It was a new revelation which was dawning upon them. Yet though it was so entirely new to them as a revelation, they felt that

it was not new in itself as a reality. They had never apprehended the promise which God had made unto the fathers. Now the meaning of the promise seems to be clear to them. The hope of Israel was a hope reaching beyond the grave.

True, they were yet far from understanding the details of the future. Many a misconception lingered about their anticipations even to the very end of the forty days. The very gift of Pentecost did not clear up everything. They did, however, now look forward to the promise of the Father in a way altogether different from previous imaginings. The framework of the coming dispensation baffled their conceptions, but they began to understand that the new Covenant was a manifestation of God. It was not to spring out of the old dispensation by inherent vitality. It must originate with God in heaven, and assume the organism of the older dispensation as its outer form.

Jesus speaks to them of the promise of the Father. They were to be endowed with power from on high. He is risen from the dead. He must ascend to the right hand of the Father. He will thence shed forth upon them the gift which had been promised of old.

The earliest promises contained the announcement of the gift, although obscurely.

It was in vain that the Seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head unless he could give back to man the eternal life which man had lost. The doom, 'Thou shalt surely die,' could not be done away save by the Spirit of Divine Life breathed once again into man's nostrils with the assurance, 'Thou shalt live for ever.'

If all the nations of the earth were to be blessed in Isaac there must be some communication of life from the coming Mediator which should bring them near to God by special communication of the Divine nature from Him to them.

The revealed predestination of Messiah to sit at God's right hand had been fruitless unless there were associated with it the promise that He should fill the dead bodies with life (Ps. cx. 6). They should arise with His dead body, and that could not be by merely coincident resurrection. He rose by Divine power, and they could know no true resurrection save by becoming partakers of His Divine Life.

They were to be as Gods, the children of the Most Highest (Ps. lxxxii. 6). This could only be by their incorporation into Him, whom the Father had sealed with the Spirit, and sent into the world that all who would come to Him might receive of His fulness and live.

Jesus rebuked the Jews because they were content to read the words of Moses without coming to Himself that they might have life (John v. 40). Unless they did so come, all knowledge of Him would be in vain.

Joel had announced the gift of the Spirit still more plainly in the words which St. Peter quoted at the first Christian Pentecost (Joel ii. 28). The presence of the Spirit should henceforth be no mere transitory visitation such as had been hitherto vouchsafed under the old dispensation. The Spirit thus to be given would be permanently abiding with the people of God. He would be with them not merely

for ministerial purposes, so as to authorise the sacramental acts of an appointed ministry, but for individual sanctification, so as to regenerate and enlighten all who should be within the Covenant. 'I will dwell in them and walk in them, and I will be their God and they shall be my people' (Zech. xxxi. 83). As the Gentiles were to rejoice with God's people (Deut. xxxii. 48), so the fulness of the promise would be given to all the nations of the earth that they should be delivered from the curse of fallen humanity, and where it was said unto them 'Ye are not My people, there it shall be said unto them Ye are the children of the living God' (Hos. i. 10). 'They shall know Me from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord, for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more' (Jer. xxxi. 84).

O Jesu, surely in Thee the promises of God are all Yea and Amen, to the glory of the Father in us Thy people.

Fear not, then, My son, whatever may be the trials to which thy faith is subjected. Be sure that if thy faith is sorely tried it is because thy perseverance shall be abundantly rewarded.

Yea, my Lord, I know the promise of the Father surpasses all that I can imagine. Alas that my nature should be so apt to fret at the casualties which befall me in the interval that remains. No longer will I heed them. Enough it is for me that Thou hast spoken. On Thy sure word I will rely for ever.

2. PATIENT EXPECTATION.

Great was the promise of the Father, but it was not to be hurriedly fulfilled. That which had been promised during many centuries of preparation would still need a lengthened period of discipline ere it could reach to its maturity. 'Suddenly would the Lord come into His temple,' but gradually would He build it up. The Apostles were to go forth as the organising principle of this mystic stream of life. 'I will extend peace to her as a river.' Such was the promise to the renewed earth, but it was to be accomplished amidst every kind of antagonism. Its glory would be proved, not by the immediateness of its welcome, but by the completeness of its victory. Generation should succeed to generation until the final outburst. The beginning should be small (Is. lx. 20), rejected (Is. liii. 3), oppressed and despised (Is. lx. 14), but the promise remains. 'The sons of them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee, and all they that despised thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet, and they shall call thee the City of the Lord, the Zion of the Holy One of Israel.'

The time was 'appointed of the Father' (Gal. iv. 2). 'Though the vision tarry, wait for it, for it will surely come, it will not tarry' (Hab. ii. 8). Thus were the Apostles to wait. By that waiting their faith was to be proved and their fitness developed.

In later time as they used the gift of grace they would find their work developing slowly. These

days of patient expectation would prepare them for those years of struggle.

How little do we appreciate those years. We see them as the brief initiation of the Church throughout all the world. We forget that the eyes of Apostles could never foresee the spectacle of a world-wide Christendom. Its glory and its shame were hidden from them except as they were both symbolically presented to the awe-stricken gaze of St. John. We must learn to leave our lives with God, as they did, to become fruitful after we are gone. We need, like them, to learn the lesson of patience, 'waiting hushed upon God' (Ps. lxii. 1). 'They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength' (Is. xl. 31).

They were to wait in Jerusalem. Our waiting must be in Jerusalem, that is, no fretful waiting, but full of peace. 'He that believeth shall not make haste' (Is. xxviii. 16).

Our first parents snatched impatiently at the gift of wisdom as if God grudged them somewhat which would have been for their good. We must rest assured that God's gifts are best given in God's time. That which will be helpful for those who have learnt to wait would be the destruction of the impatient. We must learn to exercise the faith and patience of the saints.

O Jesu, grant that I may wait patiently upon Thee. Thou art a hope that never faileth. Why then should I fear as though Thou hadst forgotten me.

O My son, never will I forget thee. If I leave thee as one forsaken I leave thee but to prove thee. Thou must acknowledge My goodness, not by reason of any immediate benefit that I bestow upon thee, but because of the unchangeableness of My Word, whereby I have promised thee all things.

O Lord Jesu, how weak is my return. Alas that I should be so moved by that which my outward flesh perceives. Indeed I know in my inmost heart that Thou wilt never fail them that seek Thee.

Wait thou in patience, O My son. The longer thou art kept waiting, and the more thou seemest to be cast off, so much the more expect that I have great purposes in store for thee. I will not delay to give beyond the time which thou requirest in order that thou mayest grow to the full stature, so that thou mayest be able to receive.

O Lord, indeed I acknowledge that I cannot grow save as I die. Blessed is that waiting time whereby I die to earthly hopes, that so I may rise to better hopes in fellowship of Thine eternal love.

3. POWER FROM ON HIGH.

Jesus was about to breathe upon the Apostles the gift of the Holy Ghost. They were not however to think that all was done. The breathing was an initial act, to be consummated in the fulness of power by the fire of Pentecost.

The first man, Adam, was made a living soul, and

the race of man could not be redeemed unless they had the gift of life restored to them. The second Adam would therefore be a life-giving Spirit, fulfilling the words of Isaiah respecting Himself. 'The Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the Lord. As for Me this is My Covenant with them, saith the Lord, My Spirit that is upon Thee, and My words which I have put in Thy mouth shall not depart out of Thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of Thy seed, nor out of the mouth of Thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever,' (Is. lix. 20, 21).

Emmanuel, therefore, the Virgin's Son, would not be merely an incarnate God in the midst of men, He would be God with men, abiding in a perfect fellowship of life with all who would turn from their transgression and look to Him that they might be saved. 'Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new Covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah' (Jer. xxxi. 31). 'It shall be an everlasting Covenant with them, and I will place them, and multiply them, and will set My sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore. My tabernacle also shall be with them: yea, I will be their God, and they shall be My people, and the heathen shall know that I the Lord do sanctify Israel when My sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore' (Ezek. xxxvii. 26-28).

The things of God seem to us so simple that we cannot understand the gradual development of God's works. Yet how is it in nature? Life is complete at the beginning, but it is far different from the life

developed through a matured organism in subsequent years.

The gift of the Holy Ghost united the Apostles with the Saviour, but when He was glorified that gift must manifest His glory in them as His members. The Divine presence was in some sort dependent upon the human organism of the Mediator for its manifestation. Christ could not give now in the initial strength of His resurrection that glory of the Spirit which He would communicate in the eventual completeness of His ascension. The Spirit was the same: the mode of operation needed development. Their life on earth was abidingly dependent upon the condition of His own life as He was their Head. They must therefore wait for Him to be glorified, that they might receive from on high the Spirit of glory from Him.

O Jesu, let me evermore look up to Thee, that I may experience the power of Thy Holy Spirit uniting me to Thee.

My son, that Spirit comes from Me, and only while thou dost look to Me canst thou experience the glory of His operations. Thou canst not find His power save in union with Me, neither canst thou know it in thyself unless thou know it in Me from Whom it comes.

O my Jesu, to Thee indeed will I look up. While I look up to Thee in the opened heavens by the power of the Holy Ghost who comes from Thee, I find the joy of Heaven cheering me upon the earth with the light of Thy countenance.

MEDITATION XLIII.

The Church sent forth.

Jesus therefore said to them again, Peace be unto you: as the Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost.—St. John xx. 21, 22.

1. THE GIFT OF PEACE.

ST. LUKE has told us of the hands and feet of Jesus as proving the identity of His Body. St. John in like manner speaks of His hands and side.

St. Luke has further declared the corporal reality of the form which appeared by telling us that He ate before them.

The human side of our Lord's restoration to the Church was thus complete. They were not to fear. At His first appearance He had said, Peace be to you. Thus were the disciples calmed. They felt the stability of the old human relationship restored. It was no spectre which stood in the midst of them. It was His very Self. Whatever was changed in reference to Him, His identity remained with the fulness of love as before. 'Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord.'

Now, however, Jesus would call them to a higher fellowship of peace. He would communicate to them not the mere peacefulness of human repose, but the

peace-making energy of Divine life. Again he says to them, 'Peace be to you.'

This peace consists in an active participation of His own nature by the power of the Holy Ghost.

They were henceforth to experience that peace which He gave them, not as removing fears which they might have towards Himself by reason of the supernatural character of His manifestations, but in a way much more perfect. They were to experience His gift of peace in its fulness as truly resulting from the supernatural character of His manifestations, driving away all fear. They were so to experience their active union with Himself that they would fear nothing which they had to suffer whilst carrying out His will. Their union with Himself would remove all possible fear. His life-giving Spirit would henceforth work through them, and therefore they could not doubt that it would act towards them.

This is a great truth for us all, the foundation of all the peace which we have in Jesus. We cannot truly feel ourselves safe in the presence of Jesus unless we do thus know ourselves to be safe by reason of His life-giving power. Unless we do thus rise up to the participation of His Divine nature, we sinners cannot be safe in the presence of this all-holy Judge.

The assurance of this peace is therefore given by the communication to the disciples of the very Divine commission of their Lord. They were not to be merely subordinate agents, but identified with Him in the fulness of His ministry.

A different word is used to express their com-

mission as contrasted with his own, but the difference of the word is intended to emphasise the identity of the fact. He does not issue a fresh commission, so that they should go forth to the world bearing a delegated authority, derived, but separate from Himself. He sends them forth into the world by taking them up into the very participation of that original commission which He has received. That commission lives on in them, as the life which is in the head regulates the actions of the hand not by mechanical impact but by vital energy.

His own commission does not cease, nor does He cease from its exercise because He sends them forth. He will be acting in them. 'As My Father has given a commission to Me,' to come into the world with the fulness of Divine power, 'so do I now send you forth,' partakers of my life, to do all that which I have to do for My Father. It is as if He said, 'The Father's purpose in giving Me this commission was that I might send you.' The action of Christ in His personal ministry would have been of no avail unless it had become efficacious by the apostolic ministrations of grace through His Body the Church.

The Holy Ghost is the living power by which Jesus came, and He sends forth His Church replenished with the same life. 'Receive ye the Holy Ghost.' The Church is not merely in substance the Body of Christ, but is one with Him in the power of the Spirit. She lives with His life. 'We are all baptised into one Body and are all made to drink into one Spirit' (1 Cor. xii. 13).

Jesus came to be the Peace of the redeemed by giving them the forgiveness of their sins. That peace which was in Him was to be the strength of their ministry. 'Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them, and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained.'

This life He gave them then, not by word alone but by action. That act would be completed in power when He Himself ascended to the Right Hand of power. It must however be begun while He and they were within the reach of outward communication. Although risen from the dead He was still within the reach of a natural communication with them which could not be when He was ascended. He must link them to Himself ere He left them, that when he had left them that personal intercourse might remain unbroken. The gift would afterwards be gloriously consummated, and then in future ages it would be sacramentally perpetuated, but while they were still in their natural estate, it needed personal action upon His part after the manner of men to initiate the fellowship. Otherwise they would not be able to appropriate it, nor to recognise the gift as a gift really consistent with an abiding humanity.

So then 'He breathed upon them.' What was that Breath which they then felt? It was not the mere returning current of the air which He had inhaled. His risen Body lived not by the outer atmosphere. That Breath was not derived from without. It was the very forthcoming of the Breath of life as when God breathed into Adam's nostrils at

the first. But now it is given with a greater power, for the fulfilment of a higher work. It is not given to sustain the outward functions of the natural body according to the requirements of this lower world. It is the very Breath whereby God lives. By this does the risen Humanity of Jesus live in its glory. By this is the Church to live. 'If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, He is none of His' (Rom. viii. 9). 'We are all made to drink into one Spirit' (1 Cor. xii. 13).

O Jesu, who can worthily contemplate that ministry of the Spirit which is to be exercised in Thy name as the Head of the Body wherein alone that Spirit resides !

My son, this Spirit wherein thou art to act must be Himself thy teacher, making known to thee My sacred purposes of love.

Teach me, O Lord, and strengthen me, that in the fulness of Thy Holy Spirit I may go forth to accomplish all Thy good pleasure.

Yea, My son, not by power nor by might can My work be done, but only by My Spirit. Blessed are they in whom He works. Blessed is the work which they do in My Name.

O Jesu, if Thy Holy Spirit be indeed the life of that which I do, it cannot fail. Thy Holy Spirit shall indeed fill my soul with peace whilst I act in Thy power. With this may my soul be moved, my understanding enlightened, my affections enkindled, my bodily actions purified, my words inspired, my feet sandalled, my example brightened, my influence

hallowed, my hope stimulated, my sufferings cheered, my perseverance established, and my reward made sure in the fruition of Thy love.

2. THE BREATH OF THE RISEN SAVIOUR.

His breathing when He gave the Holy Ghost serves in some degree to explain the phrase flesh and bones, which our Lord uses instead of flesh and blood.

The blood is the sustaining principle of natural life, and it requires the action of the breath to maintain itself in purity. 'The life is in the blood.' Not so however is it in the risen body. The spiritual body is sustained in the resurrection life by the power of the Holy Ghost. It breathes no more according to the law of natural vitality. Its life is in the Spirit.

The Blood shed upon the Cross seems therefore to be no longer needed for the action of the risen Body of Christ. It has its own special functions still. Those functions are a development of its previous action. St. Paul speaks of 'the Blood of sprinkling' as distinct from 'Jesus the Mediator of the New Covenant' (Heb. xii. 24).

The blood of the victim in the earlier dispensation was presented in various ways before God. It was the symbol of a life forfeited and surrendered. The blood-besprinkled offerer was in God's presence as one who had obtained a reprieve. He waited for Christ to come that the reprieve might be changed into liberation. The blood of bulls and goats could not put away sin, nor restore life.

Jesus, however, is entered into the holiest, triumphant over death, living, but not with the life of nature. He is entered with His own Blood as the acceptable offering. His resurrection manifests His Divine glory because the renewed life of His Body is not the natural life of earth. His Body lives in the participation of His eternal life. It is the Spirit of God by whom He was conceived who is also the agent of His resurrection.

The presentation of His most precious Blood is a triumphant act which of itself shows Him to be worthy to make to God an offering on behalf of all creation. If He were not abiding in eternal life with the Father, He would not be able to act in a nature thus sundered.

As He presents the Blood which was the natural instrument of His earthly life, He shows Himself to be superior to the natural forms of created activity. He shows Himself to be free from all taint of sin, for sin brings death, and if His Blood had stagnated in death it would have become an abomination. Sin destroys natural life and brings corruption. Supernatural life precludes the possibility of sin and necessitates incorruption. External corruption must always be the evidence that sin has corrupted the life-giving principle.

The death of the ancient victims showed their feebleness, for it was the destruction of their activity. The death of Christ shows His glory, for it sets Him free from the surroundings of created weakness with which He had clothed Himself for a while. He shows Himself to be the living Lord by His descent

into hell, by taking again the Body which He left in the grave, and finally by ascending therewith to the Right Hand of the Father, and presenting His Blood.

But, moreover, the Blood which He presents in heaven, as it was the natural instrument of created life, is by this presentation raised to be the chosen instrument for conveying to others the supernatural and Divine life. The blood which was the channel of corruption in the old man is the channel of purification and redemption in the new. It is the element whereby life is communicated, whether the old corrupt life or the new, the incorruptible.

The office which belonged to the Blood in the time of His humiliation fits it for the office which now in His glorification it has to exercise in His mystical Body. Through the agency of the Blood His natural Body grew upon the earth. The same Blood is the instrument of the Eternal Spirit through which His mystical Body is made to grow to its perfection by the communication of the virtues which are substantially inherent in Himself.

His Humanity is, as it were, the Heart of the whole Body of the Church, as His Divine Person is the Head thereof. The heart of stone, the dead heart of man's fallen humanity, is taken away. The old Adam ceases to exist. A new heart is given to the new race. The words of the prophet express a truth, and no mere metaphor. The second Adam is a new principle to human nature. He is the Heart of flesh (Ezek. xxxvi. 26) which God promised. This Heart of flesh, sensitive with the Blood wherein the Spirit of

Life resides, is the principle of growth and purification to the Christian Church. Gifts received from Christ would turn to corruption if they were not maintained in their purity by constant communion with Him. By the sacramental agencies of the Church this precious Blood is made continually to flow forth pure and fresh for the perfecting of the members of His Body. They who receive Him receive the Divine life by receiving Him, and become the sons of God. They are not born again of His Blood. Such birth would belong to a merely natural life. *In* that Blood they are born again to a Divine life for God the Holy Ghost acts thereby. The Blood, as also 'the Flesh, profits nothing,' i.e. *as* flesh and blood. 'It is the Spirit which quickeneth' (John vi. 63). Flesh and blood, although glorified, are but media through which the Eternal Spirit of Christ acts, but save through these media He acts not.

The blood of dead sacrifices stained the worshipper with the mark of sin and could not take the guilt away. The Blood of Jesus, full of life, quickens the worshippers to whom it is communicated with vital energy so as to remove the defilements of sin.

The healthful operation of the heart gives natural purity to the outward appearance unless there be some local affection which resists. So Jesus communicates His own righteousness as a principle of purity to His members, which will make them like Himself unless they count the Blood of the covenant an unholy thing and do despite unto the Spirit of grace (Heb. x. 29).

The blood in the former tabernacle was sprinkled exteriorly and did not affect the inner life. The Blood of Jesus is sprinkled interiorly to purge the conscience, sanctify the life, infuse the supernatural desires which befit His glorified Being, and strengthen us for the service of God.

Thus it is a principle of renewed life, quickening the heart with the power of the Holy Ghost. 'We are all made to drink into one Spirit' by this participation of the Blood of Christ. The Life is in the Blood, not now the natural life dependent upon breathing the outer air of earth, but the spiritual Life of the Breath of God, by the participation of the Holy Ghost.

The action of the blood in the natural frame is therefore very significant of the action of the Blood of Christ in His mystical Body by the power of the Holy Ghost. The water of baptism has the concomitant agency of the Blood of Christ. Christ 'comes not by water only, but by water and blood, and it is the Spirit that beareth witness' (1 St. John v. 6).

Blood and water flowed forth from His wounded side. Here was a mystery full of meanings too great for us to fathom. We can, however, trace some of its teaching.

The Lamb is in heaven as one that has been slain, because His Blood has been shed. That Blood, no longer red with earthly life, ready to pass into corruption, is a river of water of life as clear as crystal (Rev. xxii. 1), a fountain opened for sin and uncleanness (Zech. xiii. 1).

O Jesu, as Thou hast called me to live hidden with Thyself in God, let the Spirit which eternally proceedeth from Thee be my constant joy, that I may abide in the power of Thy resurrection, and rise above all the disturbances of earthly fear.

O My son, not as the world giveth, give I unto thee. My Spirit shall never fail thee if thou wilt look to Me to receive the gift with constant devotion. As the gift is ever fresh with the undying power of God, so must the love wherewith thou receivest it be ever fresh, that it may be to thee a principle of eternal life.

O my Jesu, never can I weary of this gift, never can I shrink from the calls which it implies. As I live with the power of Thy love, it shall be my joy to love Thee more and more. In every call which Thy love makes, I find some fresh communication of Thy Spirit filling me with greater joy. I long to love Thee more. O let Thy Spirit of love perfect me to receive Thee, that so I may be able to love Thee with a love worthy of Thyself, because it is the fulness of Thine own pure love working in me according to Thy will.

8. THE CORPORATE ENDOWMENT OF THE CHURCH.

The gift which our Lord gave was not given to any individual or individuals. It was given to the Church as a whole. The individual members received that gift as belonging to the communion of saints. The solidarity of the gift in which all must share is what constitutes the unity of the Church.

It is one Spirit which is given to all, and the

presence of that Holy Spirit is the unifying principle of the Church. 'By one Spirit we are all baptised into one Body,' says St. Paul, and so it was one Spirit which undividedly took possession of all at His original descent. As the Persons of the Blessed Trinity are one by the procession of the Holy Ghost, so the Church is one by the inhabitation of the Holy Ghost. We are all individually 'built together for the habitation of God by this one Spirit' (Eph. ii. 22).

We must not fail to notice two things. First, there were others of the disciples present when our Lord spoke these words as well as the Apostles. Secondly, St. Thomas was absent, so that he received the gift not by our Lord's addressing him personally, but by reason of his official fellowship with the Church as abiding in corporate unity.

This gift of the Holy Ghost was therefore a vivifying act of Divine love, by which the whole Church sprang up into the life of the Divine Sonship and the participation of the mission of Christ. It did not constitute the Apostles into a separate caste, as if the Holy Ghost dwelt with them alone. The Apostles are not a mediatorial agency separate from Christ, whom they represent, or from the Church to which they minister. Christ is the personal Mediator between God and man. He acts for God towards man. He also acts for man towards God. He is both God and man. The Apostles are an agency for communicating to His members the grace of His mediation, the joints and bands by whom the nourishment is ministered to maintain the life of the whole frame. The Holy Ghost did not come to the Church through the

Apostles, but He came to the Apostles and to those who were holding fellowship with them as constituting one Church, one Body, all waiting together to be quickened by His communication. Clergy and laity constitute one undivided Church, the Body of Christ, having Christ for her only Head.

In considering the power of the sacred ministry people are too apt to forget this, and to treat the stewardship of the Divine mysteries as if it were a stewardship of external goods entrusted by a departed master to certain delegated agents.

The Apostolic stewardship is not an authority delegated by an absent Christ. It is an authority subordinately concurrent with His own. It is an organic ministration. The Apostles do not possess the life in themselves. That is the prerogative of Christ alone, the Head. They do not transmit mechanically as conduits, but vitally as functions of the Body of Christ. The life they have from Christ is shared by all around them.

No order of men, however necessary to the vital action of the Church, can claim to absorb that vitality into themselves as solely their possession. The ministers of Christ distribute the gifts of Christ rather by a regulative than an intermediate or delegated power. Christ in His own Person acts through them.

By the procession of the Holy Ghost who dwells throughout the Body, Christ is present, giving efficacy to the word of His servants, but the efficacy is due to the Personal agency of the Holy Ghost voluntarily co-operating with the Apostolic ministry,

and giving effect to their ministrations by reason of the promises of the covenant made in Christ. The action of the Holy Ghost accompanying the sacramental ministrations is a Personal action, voluntarily pledged, and never failing. 'The Spirit breatheth where it listeth' (John iii. 8, Rev. Vers. Margin.) The bare authority of the ministry does not supersede, although it distributes the presence of the Holy Ghost. The volition of Christ the Head is not suspended on behalf of the instrumentality of His members. The will of Christ and of the Holy Ghost is one undivided Divine act. All His members have their life only while 'holding the Head' (Col. ii. 19). As He Himself says, 'Separated from Me ye can do nothing' (John xv. 5).

So then the Apostles and all the faithful were thus quickened as one Body with one Life by the participation of the same undivided Spirit, but the various members were quickened for their own proper action. Therefore the Apostles, having been set apart by Christ for their proper office, did not forfeit their official character by the new Life into which the whole company of the faithful were taken. As they had their duties to perform towards the society while they were existing together in the natural condition of disciples gathered round a common Master, so now they have their character elevated by the transforming power of the Holy Ghost, and the Holy Ghost operates throughout the Body by means of them as its natural channels. The Holy Ghost found the company of disciples possessed of an organised constitution, and took possession of the



whole. He did not come to each as a separate unit, but to all as one corporate society, and therefore to the office bearers of that society as the instruments of His unifying power.

As Adam's body was first formed and then God breathed into it the breath of life, so the Apostolic Church was formed into a social organisation by Christ before His death, and now the Life is received into all its parts by the Breath of the risen Lord.

Christ is Himself the Head, and by this Breath He gives them life not only from Himself but with Himself. He stands in the midst of them as He breathes upon them, and this Breath comes not as into the body of Adam from without, but from within. He is their Head, their Heart: their Life springs from Himself. His breathing on them is like the streaming forth of life-blood from the central organ of vitality. They are not called into life as a separate body by His creative power. They live because He lives and they are one with Him.

The Headship of Christ, and the permanence of the Apostolic ministry, are thus the condition of the Holy Ghost's abiding work in the Church. He dwells not with individuals as separately self-sufficient, nor with the Church as a complete organisation distinct from Christ, but the whole society of the faithful is partaker of Christ's resurrection by this fellowship of the Spirit, that it may grow up into Him in all things which is the Head, as from Him it is fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part (Eph. iv. 15, 16).

O Jesu, grant that the ministry of Thy Church may evermore be true to the operation of Thy Holy Spirit. Oh, since Thou hast called me to have part therein, suffer me not to act in anything save as Thy Holy Spirit of life requires.

O My son, great is My joy when the ministrations of My Body are carried into effect according to the truth of holy discipline. Then does the Eternal Spirit manifest His Divine power in that which is done. But when Mine Apostles are unfaithful then is My Spirit grieved, and My work is hindered, and My people, even Mine own members, pine, and the world thinks scorn of Me, and the powers of darkness prevail over souls whom I redeemed.

O Lord, evermore let me hold fast to Thee as the Head of the Body, that I may experience in all I do the energy of Thy risen and glorious life.

Yea, My son, because I live, ye live also, and this life wherewith ye live is My very own.

Glory be to Thee, O Lord, according to the power of that resurrection wherein Thou dost appear to us. Grant that we may duly value all the ministrations of Thy grace, because thereby we are sustained in active fellowship with Thyself as our Head.

Yea, My son, separated from Me ye can do nothing, but I am verily the Head of the Body, the Church, and that which is done by My Church is done by Myself. If I do it not, it is found to be nothing and comes to nought. That which is done by Me abides for ever.



O let me always look up to Thee, that the acts of my ministry may be made effectual according to Thy wisdom by the power of Thy grace.

Behold He acting by the Person of the Holy Ghost in one and all of My members, and rejoice in that which is done whether by thyself or by any other, for it is My doing, for He who does it, whether in thee or in them, comes from Me to do it in My name.

Even so, Lord Jesu. O Blessed Spirit of Christ, bind me evermore in the communion of saints, and so let me lose all thought of self. In myself I am dead, but in the fellowship of Thy living power, Thou callest me to share with all the saints the glory of the risen Lord.

MEDITATION XLIV.

The Gift of the Holy Ghost.

Jesus therefore said to them again, Peace be unto you: as the Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost.—St. John x. 21, 22.

**1. THE HOLY GHOST CONSUBSTANTIALLY
COMMUNICATED.**

THE Breath of Jesus was the communication of the Holy Ghost, for the Holy Ghost is the Spiritual Agent of the Son of God in all His actions. The Divine Breath never can be without a personal principle. It never can be an impersonal emanation, a thing, a cloud, a motion, separate from the personal life of the Godhead. The Holy Ghost proceeds from the Son, sustaining in Divine life that which the Son of God does.

We must, however, take this truth in connection with what our Lord says, viz., that the Holy Ghost cannot come to the disciples until He has Himself departed from them. This gift of the Holy Ghost is therefore not what we properly understand by the Personal descent of the Holy Ghost. It was an operation of the Holy Ghost within the sphere of our Lord's humanity. The Breathing was a human act to which the Divine Spirit gave efficacy. It was not, as the subsequent mission of the Holy Ghost, an

act of personal Divine authority. We may take this act as the last act of our Lord while acting in subjection to the anointing Spirit, or as the first act of His Spirit in the moment of His glorification.

Jesus had already given His Body and Blood to His Apostles, but that Body and Blood as yet unglorified had not the property of Self-communication. The Flesh of Christ cannot thus act save by the quickening power of the indwelling Spirit, and that power does not result simply from the hypostatic union. The Flesh of Christ acquires this power as an element of its glorification, having passed through death. Until He died and rose again our Lord expressly assures us that His Body must be like the corn of wheat which abideth alone (St. John xii. 24).

When our Lord rose again, His Body did not merely begin to exist with a power of life different from the breath of nature and a quality of substance freed from the laws of matter, but it also acquired, probably by gradual increase in the various stages of His ascension, the property of uniting other substances to its own spiritual being and communicating the power of the Spirit of Life whereby that Flesh itself was living.

As the Apostles had received into their bodies the Body of Christ, that Body in them must have participated in the changes to which it was subjected by our Lord's death and resurrection. Our Lord appeared in the midst of them having a spiritual Body. He breathed on them with the Breath of God. That exercise of the spiritual power of His Body must have been operating within them

as well as outside of them. The Breathing which they witnessed upon their outer frame must have been the expression of a Self-communicating energy acting upon them interiorly.

The effect of our Lord's Breathing would thus be different upon the Apostles who had received His Body, from what it was upon the other disciples who had no preparatory gift of communion with Christ's Body. The initial Eucharist of which they had partaken before the Passion would put them in a different position with reference to this Breathing from what could be occupied by any one else. This substance fitted them to be the foundation of the Church of God, as living stones primarily related to the Living Stone which is the one foundation, the nucleus of life. The Spirit of Christ would unite the others in the fellowship of the same Body, and the previous gift of the Body to the Apostles may have had an important effect in accomplishing the work of incorporation. We may be sure, however little we may be able to know respecting such a process, that the previous sacramental gift could not be without some effect. Reverently we may speculate upon the mode of its operation, although we are obliged to confess our ignorance. The words are true of the Mystical Body of Christ thus sacramentally constituted which are written concerning the formation of the natural frame, 'Thine eyes did see My substance yet being imperfect, and in Thy Book were all My members written which day by day were fashioned when as yet there was none of them' (Ps. cxxxix. 15, 16).

St. Paul writes with reference to the growth of the Church, By one Spirit we are all baptised into one Body and have been all made to drink into one Spirit (1 Cor. xii. 13). It was therefore the work of the Spirit, to unite the disciples to the Body of Christ even though they had in some sort fed thereon. The natural man could not receive the supernatural food without the intervention of the life-giving Spirit, and it would seem that until the descent of the Holy Ghost with power from on high, these primary members of the Body of Christ were living in simple subjection to the spiritual Headship of Jesus Christ without that personal capacity of spiritual action which the later gift perfected within them. That later gift could not be until the natural operation of Jesus Christ upon earth was exchanged for His exalted mediation at the Right Hand of the Father. The Spirit of Christ whereby they were made to live could be none other than the Holy Ghost, but He was consubstantially communicated to them, holding them in simple passive dependence upon Christ the Head of the Body. He was not yet given 'with power' so that they could act in their separate personalities as possessing the authority of Christ.

The difference may not be the same as that which exists between the various stages of the gift of the Spirit in the later Body of Christ, and yet these suggestions may help us perhaps to realise somewhat of the difference, so real, although to us so inscrutable, between the gift of the Holy Ghost in Holy Baptism making us members of Christ to live

with His life, and the gift of the Holy Ghost in Confirmation making us perfect Christians to act in His power.

O Jesu, how can I praise Thee for the gift of Thy Holy Spirit! O let me cherish this heavenly gift with thankfulness and devotion. Let every personal thought of my own natural self be hushed while I wait in entire dependence upon Thee. Let every natural emotion be hushed that Thou mayest rule me according to Thy will.

My son, I have called thee to live with My life, as one of the members of My Body. Truly it is thy wisdom, if thou livest solely for me. Lean not unto thine own understanding, but look to Me in the glory of the Father that I may guide thee in ways which thine understanding cannot fathom.

O Lord Jesu, I desire to be wholly Thine. To Thee would I give myself with the entire surrender of nature and the entire acceptance of grace. To Thee would I give myself according to the necessary obligations of my baptismal vows and all the aspirations after spiritual perfection to which Thy Spirit leads me. I would be Thine in all the bonds of ministerial subordination and all the joys of religious consecration. Hold Thou me up by Thy Holy Spirit. Let Thy loving Spirit lead me forth into the land of everlasting righteousness, the joy and glory of Thy saints.

2. THE HOLY GHOST PERSONALLY DESCENDING.

Wherever the Son of God might be upon the earth, and under whatsoever form of bodily presence He might be found, there the Holy Ghost was of necessity consubstantially present, operating in all that He did, and so anointing Him as the Christ. But while the Son of God was personally acting in this lower sphere of human life, the personal action of the Holy Ghost was, so to speak, enclosed by His personality. The Holy Ghost did not act from Him, or in His name, but in Him, and according to the immediate dictate of His personal human will.

The Three Divine Persons act eternally in the mysterious unity of the Divine will; but they cannot act collaterally within the sphere of finite manifestation. God the Father acts in creation immediately, because the instrumental action of the Son and Spirit is in consubstantial union with Himself. The Son of God acts in redemption, becoming Incarnate, and that work is perfected by the glorification of humanity at the ascension, but while the act is the immediate act of the Second Person of the Trinity it is done in subordination to the will of the Father as the One principle of Godhead, and with the Holy Ghost as the processional power by whom the Divine nature exercises the faculty of Self-extension. It is the work of the Holy Ghost to sanctify those who are taken into the Body of Christ by developing within their finite capacities the life and likeness of Jesus Christ, the glorified Head of the Body, seated

now at the Right Hand of the Father, and this operation of the Holy Ghost requires the mediatorial action of Christ at the Right Hand of God as the empowering link whereby the created nature is sustained within the influence of His Divine action, while the merits of Christ continually call forth the gift of the Holy Ghost for all the members of His Body as the manifestation of the Father's love.

While there is this specialty of operation belonging to each of the Divine Persons, it is impossible that any two of the Divine Persons should be acting together at the same time upon the earth otherwise than in their proper consubstantial relationship, for if they did so, then the Divine unity would be broken. They act by relative participation in one another's action, but not as if assisting one the other. The work of each is solitary and complete. The Holy Ghost could not begin to do His proper work until the Son of God was gone away entering into His glory. The Holy Ghost was not given during the ministry of Christ because Jesus was not yet glorified (John vii. 89), neither can Christ now leave the ministry of His glory at the Right Hand of the Father to act in His own Person upon the earth without destroying the foundation upon which the action of the Holy Ghost rests, and interfering with the operation of the Blessed Comforter who has come to act in His stead amongst men here below.

Consequently, although the disciples had received the Holy Ghost, subordinating them in living fellowship to Christ the Head, they could not receive the Holy Ghost with power until Jesus was gone up on

high. When His Person was removed from the sphere of earthly action, then, but not till then, could the Holy Ghost act with the fulness of Divine sanctification to develop the life of God in the persons of His chosen ones.

The Personal descent of the Holy Ghost is therefore an act by which not merely are we taken into Christ, but also Christ is revealed in our persons. Had Christ remained upon earth, the Church would have had nothing to do but to wait upon the dictates of His Personal will. Now the Holy Ghost illuminates our will that we may claim, arrange, and accomplish what shall be for the glory of Christ, and communicates to us supernatural strength from the ascended Lord to do that which is according to the will of His Divine Sovereignty.

The Personal descent of the Holy Ghost implies rather the concurrence of the Divine Majesty with us in our finite nature, than the absorption of ourselves out of the finite nature into the Infinite glory of Christ.

The Holy Ghost may descend so as to overpower the human will. He may use the human instrument externally to the Body of Christ without communicating His sanctifying gifts. Thus He descended temporarily upon the prophets of old times, and as we know He sometimes used even the persons of wicked men as His instruments. Thus He seems to have descended upon Cornelius and his household while they were yet in a state of nature, communicating to them certain powers from heaven, before they were united to the Body of Christ. Those external powers did not avail for their sanctification.

It was necessary that they should be baptised in order to receive the life which can only be had within the sphere of Christ's Body. Others again receive the baptismal life while yet the Holy Ghost is not said to 'fall upon them' until gifts of special power are conveyed, and Confirmation by the laying on of hands is the covenanted channel for the conveyance of these powers.

There is a further descent of the Holy Ghost in the gift of Holy Orders as conveying a character, and empowering the individual to do personally the work of the ministry, whether in the priesthood or in the episcopate. However intimately these gifts in the covenant of grace are connected with the sanctification of the individual, they have that sanctification as a concurrent blessing rather than a primary intention. We are taken into the fulness of Divine life by being baptised into Christ, but the subsequent descent of the Holy Ghost communicates to us power by which our union with Christ can be manifested. First God takes us into His Son; then He reveals His Son within us.

So it would seem that the disciples were made partakers of the Spirit of Life now on the first day of our Lord's resurrection. The Spirit of Christ their Head sanctified them as His members, 'Together with My dead Body shall they arise' (Is. xxvi. 19). So Christ spake by the prophet. The Body whereon the Apostles had fed could not restrain itself from communicating to them the energies of the Spirit whereby Jesus was raised. But they were to wait until Christ was gone up on high, that the

Holy Ghost might hold them to Christ in a sanctification which was not merely dependent but co-operative. While Jesus was upon earth He was the perfect and solitary manifestation of the Incarnate God. When He was gone the Holy Ghost would descend to communicate the fulness of Divine power to His Body while they acted in the unity of the spiritual life as members of the Incarnate.

O Jesu, as Thou hast given me the power of Thy Holy Spirit, grant that I may always walk in remembrance of Thy Divine Headship and act in the confidence of Thy power evermore abiding with Thy Church.

Surely, My son, the Holy Ghost shall teach thee all things if thou wilt look up to Me. All things are possible to those who will act ever true to My Divine will.

Alas ! O Lord, that I should ever desire anything but what Thou hast ordained. Thy purposes are far beyond my desires. O let me rejoice in the guidance of Thy Holy Spirit that I may not rest in my littleness, but rise to the glory of Thy predestination.

3. THE HOLY GHOST MINISTERIALLY CO-OPERATING.

While the Holy Ghost thus sanctifies us in the Body of Christ and reveals the power of Christ within us, illuminating the will to choose that which His Divine Person is able to accomplish, He comes to the Body of Christ for certain fixed duties and ministries according to the requirements of the

heavenly kingdom. 'All these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit' (1 Cor. xii. 11).

The highest ministrations of the Body of Christ are wrought by the power of the very same Spirit by whom we are sanctified for the humblest duties of life. The mode of manifestation varies: the Spirit of Life is one.

The same Spirit abides with the Church from age to age. He is the strength of all her ministrations. Outward circumstances may vary but the Spirit which ministers to our life is the same.

We must never allow ourselves to value Divine ministries by the accidental phenomena which God may vouchsafe to bestow at certain times and places. We are not to feel ourselves refreshed by the greatness of the signs of God's presence, but in the multitude of peace whereby the Holy Ghost enables us to rejoice as the heirs of the kingdom (Ps. xxxvii. 11).

We must never doubt the power of Christ to accomplish in us any work of grace as effectually as in the earliest days of the Church. The Holy Ghost is Almighty, and He can accomplish in us both individually and collectively all that He has ever wrought. He not only can, but will. We must be looking for the ministrations of the Church to regain, amidst the troubles of the latter days, those gifts of glory which attended her earliest struggles with the world.

All the work of Christ's Church is but the ministration of the Spirit. We must not think that we are ever weak because earthly things are wanting to us. We must be looking for the strength of the

Holy Ghost and resting in His changeless ministry as all-sufficient under all possible variations of social necessity.

The gift of the Holy Ghost is a continual procession. We are not to speak or think as if He had come down once for all. No! His descent is perpetual, He has come down and is continually coming. He comes forth continually from the Father giving the flush of Divine life to all the members of the Only Begotten Son. He comes forth from the Son as the Head of the Body, spreading the energy of Divine life through all that belong to Him. His procession is eternal. His sanctifying effluence is continual. The ministry which He has called forth can never be void of His life. The ministry is for the edification of the Body of Christ, and if the presence of the Holy Ghost were to fail, the life of the Body of Christ would be gone.

Christ when He ascended left a ministry behind with the power of the Holy Ghost. 'He gave some apostles; and some prophets; and some evangelists; and some pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ; till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ' (Eph. iv. 11-13).

O Jesu, as Thou hast called me into this ministry, grant that I may ever exercise it only for Thy glory.

My son, be assured that I will never fail thee, if thou art true to Me. The great diffi-

culties which My servants have to meet are not intended for their overthrow but for the manifestation of My glory in them, and I will make My word to triumph in every place.

Even so, dear Lord. O let me always go forth in the strength of Thy Holy Spirit that I may find the greatness of Thy power, the security of Thy promises, and the glory of Thy truth.

MEDITATION XLV.

The Ministry of Reconciliation.

Whose soever sins ye forgive, they are forgiven unto them; whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.—St. John xx. 23.

1. THE UNIVERSALITY OF SIN.

These words of our Lord set forth the purpose of the Church's mission. She comes to cleanse a sinful world. Our Lord did not call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. His Church goes forth to call men from the bondage of Satan. The kingdom of Heaven, which the Forerunner proclaimed is an organisation for the overthrow of Satan's tyranny by the power of the Holy Ghost. The whole purpose of Christ's coming is to establish a kingdom of light triumphant over the kingdom of darkness. He comes to conquer Satan. 'If I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you' (St. Luke xi. 20).

O miserable bondage of sin! 'Whoever committeth sin is the slave of sin' (St. John viii. 34). The Church goes forth in the name of the Eternal Son to make men free. So shall they be free indeed (St. John viii. 36). This is the liberty wherewith Christ makes us free (Gal. v. 1), the freedom of a loving service, freedom therefore not *from*, but *for*, obedience.

True obedience is the act of the free. It springs out of the unchangeable relationship of sonship. Men were henceforth to realise this in themselves. They were to be freed from an external tyrant whose domination made them altogether unfit to abide in the house of God, and although they would have to serve God for a season with an earthly service not outwardly differing from that of a slave until the time appointed of the Father (Gal. iv. 2), yet the Son would make them really free. He has done so. The glory of the final resurrection shall reveal their freedom. They shall share His sovereignty for ever, raised as God's sons to share with Jesus in His risen life.

The Church's commission to loose from sin is a commission to regenerate. The Divine sonship is such a freedom that no tyranny can bind. The curse is upon all men by nature. They are slaves. The Son Himself took the form of a slave by coming in the flesh. The resurrection reverses the doom. They are begotten unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. Death can no longer hold the sons of God, for they are risen with Christ.

This power of loosing is given to the Church by the inbreathed onflow of the life of Christ. Christ as the true Eliakim shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. The key of David which He bears admits to a new life, beyond the power of anyone else to gainsay. 'He shall open and none shall shut, and He shall shut and none shall open' (Is. xxii. 22, 23; Rev. iii. 7). That commission which He exercises in heaven in His Person, He exercises on earth by the apostolical ministry. He acts through every

minister in whom the solidarity of the Church finds its exponent. Collectively and individually the promise is made sure: 'Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven' (S. Matt. xvi. 19; xviii. 18). 'Whosoever sins ye remit they are remitted unto them, and whosoever sins ye retain they are retained.'

The Jews accused our Lord of blasphemy when He said 'Thy sins be forgiven thee,' and our Lord vindicated His power to utter those words by proceeding to give new life to the palsied limbs. 'He saith to the sick of the palsy, Arise, take up thy bed and go unto thine house' (Matt. ix. 6; Luke v. 21).

In so doing He was not merely doing a work in evidence of supernatural power, but He was exhibiting His special authority over sin by removing sickness as being the consequence of sin. Hereby He taught the Jews the real character both of sin and of pardon.

The Jews at the time, like most men nowadays, thought not of sin as a bondage, but only thought of the punishment of sin. They thought it blasphemous on the part of a man to claim the prerogative of assuring any sinner of future immunity from punishment. Jesus had not done this. God Himself could not thus arbitrarily cancel the penalty of sin, leaving the sinner still unchanged. To cancel the consequences of sin, to overlook or condone sin, would be to make Himself participant therein. God forgives, only by restoring to holiness. The sinner cannot be forgiven save by restoration to holiness. In

speaking to the palsied man Jesus had not exercised an arbitrary power of forgiveness, but a spiritual power of renewal. The sin-stricken frame renewed to vigour attested the renewal of the sin-stricken soul to purity.

By this miracle our Lord showed that He, as the Son of man, had power (delegated authority) upon earth to forgive sins. He wrought that miracle not merely for His own justification at that particular time, but to manifest also the authority which He would leave behind with His Church. In the ministry of pardon, according to the commission of the risen Saviour, the Church does not arbitrarily remove the penalty of sin. She communicates life by the power of the renewing Spirit. So does the work of Jesus never cease. This renewal of the penitent is still His act, although He, the Head of the Body, has bound Himself to act upon earth by the ministration of His Church. His breath still lives in those whom He has sent. It is the spiritual life of His risen Body for ever. This quickening Breath is the pledged co-operation of the Holy Ghost. The Church of Christ forgives sins, quickens souls, because she has that life which sin had forfeited. So does the Son accomplish the command which He received of the Father (St. John x. 18). He is the Father of the world to come (Is. ix. 6), the author of everlasting salvation to all them that obey Him (Heb. v. 9). 'As My Father has commissioned me, so send I you, that My commission to give life may be accomplished. Whosoever sins ye remit they are remitted unto them; your ministry shall restore them to the life

of grace. Whosoever sins ye retain they are retained, for none can receive the gift of life save by the covenant of grace of which I appoint you to be the guardians.'

O Jesu, how can I praise Thee for the gift of new life which Thou hast bestowed upon me in Thy Church. Surely Thou hast gathered me out of the power of Satan. To Thee be all the praise.

My son, as I have put away thy sins by the power of the Eternal Spirit, take heed that thou dost ever hereafter walk in the power of that Blessed Spirit, so that thou mayest triumph over all the assaults of Satan.

Yea, Lord Jesu, I will look to Thee. Be Thou ever with me, that I may walk in the fellowship of Thy resurrection as those should walk who are dead to sin in union with Thyself.

2. THE REALITY OF ABSOLUTION.

Before Christ came there was a promise of forgiveness of sins, and a typical organisation by which the promised gift was exhibited in the acts and relationships of an external covenant. Moses made and ordered all things according to a heavenly pattern which was showed to him (Ex. xxv. 40), and St. Paul speaks of the Mosaic covenant as being a worldly sanctuary (Heb. ix. 1) distinct from the heavenly antitype. That antitype received earthly form and manifestation in the law. The law, however, could not set man free. The bondage of Satan was universal until

the Son came to give the freedom. That freedom to serve God consists in the possession of the life of God, without which we cannot do the work of God. The life which was forfeited in Adam was not restored, could not be restored, until God became incarnate in Jesus Christ. The assumption of our human nature by His Divine Person caused a resurrection of Divine life within the frame of man, whereas all the overshadowings of Divine power up to that moment had left the flesh of man unchanged. Man could not change himself, could not rise to God. God must personally clothe Himself with manhood. So only could man's nature regain that quickening of the Spirit which is essential for all who would be truly free from the taint of sin. His nature was formed to have its completeness in God. Without God it is tainted. God comes and it is renewed. It cannot be in a state of natural perfection without the supernatural complement of the Divine life. The Incarnation perfects nature and adds gifts which are beyond.

The incarnate God is the Righteousness of His members. The communication of His Spirit joins us to Him. We live with His life. The extension of His Body is the extension of His Righteousness. We cannot be in His Body without having our sins put away. We are made the Righteousness of God in Him (2 Cor. v. 21).

The gift of the remission of sins stands therefore naturally in the forefront of the Resurrection-privileges of the Church. The terms of the gift express the purpose for which the Church was insti-

tuted, not the way in which the work was to be carried out. The Church was to be the covenanted Body in which man should obtain the forgiveness of sins.

Here it will be well to observe the difference of order in the teachings of Leviticus and of the risen Saviour.

The law was given as a shadow of heavenly truths. Leviticus begins with treating of the burnt offering, for this belongs naturally to that estate of perfect holiness which was foreshadowed. The sin offering and the trespass offering are not mentioned until afterwards, for sin is an exceptional, disturbing influence, requiring therefore a secondary mention.

The first words of the risen Saviour on the contrary speak of the work which He entrusts to His disciples of forgiving sins, for it is in the sinful world that their work is to be carried on.

In the essential ideal perfection of the Church, the Communion of Saints stands as the first thought, just as it is first mentioned in the Creed. In the practical work of extending the Church the forgiveness of sins comes first. The Church does not grow by simple self-development from within. It conquers, it feeds upon, a sinful world around. The power to effect that conquest is therefore the first power of which the risen Saviour speaks.

Of the details of this power and the development of grace amongst His saints, our Lord was speaking during the forty days of Easter. He spake of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God (Acts i. 3).

These primary words of Christ involve the whole ministry of reconciliation, first in baptism, and

secondly in post-baptismal gifts of pardon, but all, from first to last, reveal the mysterious reality of Divine power. God spake by the prophets. God speaks by the Apostles. 'Incline your ear and come unto Me: hear and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David' (Is. lv. 8). The pardon was no mere external gift, a purifying of the flesh, such as was known under the old dispensation. It was the answer of a good conscience towards God by the resurrection of Jesus Christ (1 Peter iii. 21).

O Lord Jesu, Thou hast prepared Thy path in the great waters that Thou mayest bring Thy people into the land of refreshment.

My son, dost thou know what the bondage of sin really is? Truly are those blessed ones free whom My Spirit guides. Hast thou experienced, accepted, used the pardon which My indwelling Spirit gives?

O my Lord, I am indeed guilty in that I have used the great gifts of Thy love to so little effect. I have not been straitened by reason of any niggardliness in Thy gift, but by my own want of steadfastness in answering to Thy call.

The gifts of My grace are mighty with Divine power to the pulling down of the strongholds of Satan. They who are in the bondage of darkness shall find the light of life.

O Lord, it is heaven indeed to be free from sin, and blessed are those whom Thou dost make perfect in Thyself as the Way of life, that they may walk in the law of the Lord.

3. THE NECESSITY OF ANATHEMA.

The ministry of the Church is not an indiscriminating ministry of forgiveness. The forgiveness would be no real forgiveness if it were so. The Church is bound to retain as well as to loose, for her mission is to subdue the powers of evil, that Christ may be glorified ; and this is a mission far greater than the mere effort to gather individual souls from the tyrant's power. The power of binding and loosing, of remitting and retaining, is given with a view to universal benefit, not for vengeance upon the individual. Vengeance is the Divine prerogative, and is reserved to the day of final judgment. Sins meanwhile are retained by ecclesiastical authority that sinners may be loosed by Divine grace. This is exemplified in the case of Hymenæus and Alexander, whom St. Paul ' delivered unto Satan, that they by their suffering might be taught not to blaspheme ' (1 Tim. i. 20).

The power of the keys is too often treated as if it dealt only with the final condition of the soul, whereas it really has to do with the immediate communication of grace. The gift of absolution is not the assurance of final pardon, for that none can give. It is the assurance of Divine help immediately binding Satan and loosing souls from his grasp, and this may be done either by removing the consequences of sins as being obstructions to grace, or by enforcing the consequences of sin, so that the soul may be awakened to the need of grace.

The individual soul is thus to be cared for in the twofold exercise of ecclesiastical discipline, and the body of Christ is to receive edification by the twofold purification of those who are united to Him. The retention of sins is not the simple exclusion from final salvation, for this is not the purpose of the Christian ministry. 'Them that are without God judgeth' (1 Cor. v. 12). The deliverance unto Satan by the retention of sins is in order that 'by the destruction of the flesh the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus' (1 Cor. v. 5).

This gift of absolution therefore is by no means what people so often think it to be, a gift of final pardon, in the reception whereof the soul may rest satisfied independently of its own fitness for Divine glory, nor is the power of excommunication a power to withhold from salvation those who are worthily seeking the Divine acceptance. The Church has a covenanted power to help individual souls in their struggle with sin. By the gift of absolution Satan is bound. By the retention of sins the immediate power of Satan for the temporal punishment of sin is made subservient to the final deliverance of the sinner by the grace of Christ, and the temporal consequences of sin are changed into means of sanctification.

The heavenly ratification of the earthly judgment is contemporary, not subsequent. 'What thou shalt bind on earth shall be as having been bound in heaven.' So our Lord had spoken before to St. Peter (Matt. xvi. 19). So now He speaks to all. 'Whosoever sins ye forgive, they are forgiven, and whoso-

ever sins ye retain, they are retained.' The heavenly ratification is in the perfect tense, not the future. Christ in heaven acts along with His servants in the ministry of grace, and this has reference especially to the relation of the soul to Satan during the time of our earthly discipline. He does not pledge Himself that present grace shall necessarily involve the further gift of final perseverance. We are too apt to think of pardon as if it were an arbitrary act of the Divine will, but God is a God of order and of justice. He does not hold any back from salvation because He is unwilling that they should be saved. He does not admit any to glory because the gifts of grace may be extorted by compulsion or lavished in heedlessness by those to whom He has entrusted the ministry of reconciliation. The retention of sins is something more than the refusal of absolution. Unhappily we are too apt to treat the discipline of the Church as if sin were an impersonal infirmity of nature, instead of recognising the state of sin as a state of bondage to Satan. We long to secure the verdict of the last day, instead of desiring to recognise Christ as our present Saviour, acting towards us in the ministry of grace, whom we shall then have as our Judge when the day of grace is past.

The anathemas of the Church are not mere vindictive utterances of bigotry rejoicing to anticipate the final doom which Christ will utter. They do not affect the final sentence of the Judge, but they are not impotent threats. God has given this power to His Church for edification, not for destruction.

Alas! we suffer much because the tribunal of

penitence is regarded only as a means of getting pardon and peace. It needs to be known as the means of getting 'health and a cure.' In the general neglect of the severer side of her ministry the Church has forfeited much of the invigorating power of her benediction. That which God has joined together cannot be cut in twain. If we are content that our anathemas should be regarded as superfluous threats, our absolutions must sink to the level of idle consolation. Absolution and anathema are both of them subservient to the ministry of holy love. If we refuse to speak the words which the Holy Ghost teacheth for the retention of sin, we forfeit the power of the Holy Ghost to make our words effectual for the ministry of righteousness to the sinner.

O Jesu, let me remember the sanctity of Thy Divine covenant that I may never presume upon its indulgences. Surely Thou hast ordained the ministry of reconciliation, not for my ease in this present world, but for my sanctification, that I may be fitted for Thy glory hereafter.

Take heed, My son, that thou art watchful in all things. Refuse not My discipline, which is appointed for thy healing, and accept the freedom which thou obtainest from My ministers as a gift of love pledging thee to fight against the enemy from whom thou art thus loosed.

O my Jesu, blessed be Thy name for those gifts of the Spirit whereby Thou dost call me to live in the participation of Thine ascended glory. Thou who didst raise Lazarus hast raised me by a better resur-

rection in the fellowship of Thy risen life, and as Thou didst then bid Thy disciples loose him, so hast Thou given power to Thy ministers that they may loose me. Blessed are they who, being loosed from Satan's bonds, cling close to Thee. Thou hast loosed me that I may choose Thee and go forward in Thy love ; but it were better that Satan should hold me in his bondage for a time than that, being now loosed, I should use my freedom so as to rebel against Thee, my Redeemer.

MEDITATION XLVI.

Reason Perfected in Divine Experience.

But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe.

And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas was with them. Jesus cometh, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you. Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and see my hands; and reach *hither* thy hand, and put it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing. Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God. Jesus saith unto him, Because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.—St. John xx. 24-29.

1. THE DEMANDS OF INTELLECT.

It was quite natural that St. Thomas should be absent from the company of the disciples when Jesus appeared. Our Lord does not seem to have told them to keep together with any promise that if they did so He would come. On the contrary, any thought of seeing our Lord at Jerusalem seemed to be set aside by His declaration that they were to meet Him in Galilee. The language apparently indicates that St. Peter was also absent when the two disciples from Emmaus entered the chamber, although he may have joined them afterwards.

Possibly the absence of St. Thomas may be taken as implying a certain want of community-spirit. The narrative may teach us that we ought to abide in fellowship one with another, so as to be ready for

any gifts of Christ over and above what we may expect which Jesus may be pleased to bestow. This, however, is rather a lesson for ourselves than a law which St. Thomas at that time could be expected to anticipate. The most we can say is that his conduct implies a certain reliance upon self, instead of a desire to lose self in the fellowship of others such as would belong to a simple, humble, childlike mind, and that this incident is therefore a remarkable testimony to the truth of the narrative.

St. Thomas may have had some theory in his own mind as to the predicted appearance of the risen Saviour, to which they were all looking forward in Galilee. We may assume that he looked forward to some merely spiritual manifestation. His mind was fixed upon the end, and he would shape the intermediate events so as to suit the end which he contemplated.

It was not merely, perhaps not principally, the physical difficulty of the resurrection which would make him hesitate. He may have regarded the resurrection of the very flesh as a continuance of limitation to our Lord's activity, whereas he supposed that the life beyond the grave would be for our Lord an existence entirely free from such conceptions of space as a bodily resurrection seemed necessarily to involve. Furthermore he would think that his own more 'spiritual' view was sustained by our Lord's declaration that He would meet them far away in Galilee. These bodily manifestations in Jerusalem appeared to him inconsistent with the freedom of the new life to which, in accordance with that

promise, he was looking forward. The old Jerusalem was the place of death. Galilee was to be the home of light and power.

He had said upon a former occasion, 'Let us also go that we may die with Him.' Apparently our Lord's word about death suggested to him that we must die, as Lazarus had died, before we could profit by Christ's death. Christ was evidently going up to Jerusalem to brave death. Thomas was ready to go up and die too. His faith was too strong in the great end of Christ's ministry to allow of any shrinking through fear. His faith was not feeble. He erred through self-confidence. He reasoned constructively as to the future, supposing that if the things of the present were to have any existence in the world of the future, they must retain their present relationships as well as their present substance altogether unchanged.

Similarly, afterwards, when our Lord had said, 'Whither I go, ye know the way,' Thomas replied, 'Lord, we know not whither, and how know we the way?'

He did not understand that the objects of faith cannot be determined by the co-ordinates of reason, although the substance on which faith relies remains unchanged throughout all the external developments of progress.

Probably St. Thomas failed to recognise the one Christ in two natures never to be divided, because he could not conceive of the humanity continuing unless it continued under our present limitations. He did not understand that its transformations would be-

come the way to a sphere of existence which defies our apprehension until we have attained to it. Well might he be content to die, expecting to live with Christ, but life with Christ would be a new life wholly Divine, not a continuance of this life with the marks of human struggle.

With such a habit of mind, he would feel that the coming manifestation in Galilee was altogether independent of any conduct of the assembled company during the interval. He sought not their ineffectual sympathy. He had a strong personal faith in Christ, but he realised inadequately the conditions of the future manifestation. He did not see them to be dependent upon the mutual action of those who were to share the gifts in common. He had known Christ in nature. He expected Christ in glory. He did not recognise the mystical Christ. Probably he thought that we should live with Christ as angels live with the Eternal God, both He and we set free from any continuity of earth. He did not see the necessity of sharing with others in the experiences of Christ's mystical Body in order that we might individually attain to the vision of the glory made known to all.

With a mind thus predisposed, he could not see any need to join the common assembly until all were departing to Galilee. He waited to see Jesus there. Very likely he came to the second meeting on purpose to make arrangements for quitting Jerusalem. The paschal feast being now ended, they were free to leave the city.

'After eight days' seems to mean on the following Sunday evening, not the Saturday evening. If so

it implies that calculation of the day-hours as lasting from midnight to midnight which characterises St. John's Gospel, and which underlies the Christian observance of the Lord's Day. Sunday has its first vespers, but it lasts on until the midnight ere the second day of the week begins.

St. Thomas was still refusing to believe what the others had told him, not probably on naturalistic grounds, but under the influence of an imperfect dogma. His faith was limited by the fears of a blind love, not by the sneers of unexpectant indifference.

Such a view of the character of St. Thomas helps us to see the necessity of being on the watch for Christ to show Himself in modes which our calculation cannot predict. He has revealed the future in so far as it is necessary for us to shape our own conduct, but we must be looking for intermediate manifestations in order that our conduct meanwhile may be guided by His providential government of His Church.

Thomas would put his fingers into the nail-prints, and his hand into the wounded side. A resurrection which was not subject to the present conditions of matter did not seem to him to be a possibility. 'The natural man understandeth not the things of the Spirit of God, because they are spiritually discerned' (1 Cor. ii. 14). Our intellect must not lay down the conditions under which the promises of Christ shall be fulfilled, but yet we must hold fast those promises, even though involving phenomena which are to us in our present state altogether irreconcilable. The Divine power baffles our expectation. We must prepare ourselves humbly, setting aside

the theories of self-will. Christ is training His Church as one Body in union with Himself, so that finally all as one may behold His glory, as with one individual act of apprehension.

O Blessed Jesu, let me ever be upon the watch for Thee. I know what Thou hast prophesied, but I know not how Thou wilt prepare me to receive Thy gifts. Let me not cling to Thy promises by my own understanding, so as to reject the very discipline of grace whereby those promises are being fulfilled. Help me with such firmness of faith to grasp Thy bounty that with childlike humility I may accept the offers of Thy love.

Yea, My son, thou must ever be looking to Me. My word shall accomplish that which I please, but it shall work in ways which thou canst not understand. Accept My grace with a largeness of expectation proportionate to the promises I have given, but refuse not My discipline in the eagerness of thy self-will, as if My promises were limited by the laws which thy present intellect can determine.

Lord Jesu, I look to Thee, knowing nothing, but relying on Thy most sure word. Ever let me remember my ignorance that I may lay hold upon Thy word, and interpret Thy word not according to the dulness of my intellect, but the growing illumination of Thine own Divine truth who art the speaker, and speakest of Thyself to Thine elect in ways which human reason cannot know.

2. THE RESPONSE OF GRACE.

Thomas seems to have spoken in no rebellious spirit, but in the eagerness of his nature, over-confident in his anticipations of what Christ would do. God was pleased to meet him as he asked.

We must never expect God to give us plainer demonstrations of His truth than He has given, if we refuse what ought to suffice. St. Thomas desired the same manifestation to himself which had been given to the others. He might well be assured that our Lord would not treat him in any inferior way.

Such a claim being made by him does not justify us in thinking that God ought to deal with us in any special ways of our own determination. St. Thomas was upon a level with the other Apostles, and there was no reason why he should receive the truth of Christ at second hand. They had received no authority different from his own, and he was entitled to as full a gift of revelation as the rest. He was not seeking any special proofs beyond what the others had received, but he claimed the same intellectual experiences as had been vouchsafed to the others.

He put forward his claim, not so much in doubt of God's power as in reliance upon His love. This was a holy boldness, even though there was not wanting an element of faulty self-will.

All of them had been guilty of the like fault, and Jesus rebuked them 'because they did not believe those who had seen Him;' but the fault of St. Thomas was not different in its character from that

of the rest, except that he was standing out against a greater degree of collective authority. He was not holding out in any spirit of intellectual scorn; his intellect was subservient to his love in making the demand. He could not be satisfied with an abstract belief in the resurrection of Jesus unless he attained to a personal grasp of its reality.

His words imply that he recognised the spiritual character of the resurrection while being confident of the unchanged individuality of the risen Lord. Christ's heart must have for him the same individual love. Christ's body must bear the marks of His Passion, not merely as superficial scars, but as doorways of abiding sympathy whereby He would welcome the touch of His people. He had no gross and earthly conception of the risen Body. Had the Body remained in its earthly condition he could not thus have handled the wounds. In the lower condition it had suffered; in its glorified condition it invited all to claim their share in the merits achieved thereby. None could hide themselves in the wounds of a dead body. Thomas was the first of all the multitudes who would desire to hide themselves in the wounds of the glorified Saviour.

There was thus in him a great exercise of faith, while there was also a slowness to accept any determination without full personal satisfaction.

Jesus pardoned the one while He rewarded the other.

We must never expect that God will go out of His way to give us satisfaction merely for the solution of doubts when He has spoken with sufficient plain-

ness by the authority of His Church. We may, we must, look for God to show Himself to us as fully in the gifts of His grace as He shows Himself to those who have been before us. He will never heed the demands of cold incredulity. He will never fail to respond to the demands of faithful love.

O Jesu, I place my whole reliance upon Thee. All that Thou teachest me in Thy Church I am ever ready to maintain. Grant that I may lay hold upon Thee with an individual love, and thus experience the individuality of that love wherewith, even in spite of my sins, Thou lovest me as Thou didst die for me.

Trust in My love, My son. Draw near to Me with the full assurance of faith, and I will give to thee all that thou requirest.

O Lord, my heart is sadly cold. Nevertheless let Thy call encourage me. Show Thyself to me with all the sympathy of Thine adorable Passion, that the touch of Thy risen glory may kindle in me the consciousness of Thine unchanging truth.

8. THE ADVANCE OF FAITH.

When our Lord appeared to St. Thomas, he who expressed the desire to touch the human Body suddenly burst forth in adoration of the Divine Person of the Saviour. He had doubted of a human fact. He is moved to the acknowledgment of a Divine mystery.

Thus we see how the earthly surroundings fell

away, and the Divine truth which filled his mind began to act immediately.

‘Thomas, because thou hast seen Me thou hast believed.’ So spake our Lord. What then did St. Thomas believe? He believed much more than He saw. Had he merely believed in the resurrection, there would have been no blessing attaching to such faith. ‘Blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed.’ It is the vision whereby faith contemplates the unseen which is the real source of blessing. When Thomas heard the words which showed how Jesus had all along been reading his heart, he at once accepted the fulness of the Divine truth. He exclaimed, ‘My Lord and my God!’

As Nathanael in the opening of the Gospel felt the power of Jesus when Jesus told him of the secret action which had won his favour, so now in the opening of the resurrection epoch, Thomas rises to a still greater avowal of belief in Christ’s Divinity because Jesus shows him that it is His eye which searcheth the intents of the heart.

Thomas would not believe without sufficient external evidence of the external fact, but he could claim the blessing of those who believed though they had not seen, for his faith immediately advanced in grateful response to embrace the unseen reality of the Divine Majesty.

The truest faith springs out of really honest doubt, but no doubt is honest unless there be in the heart a readiness to pay the tribute of adoring love to God when the doubt is cleared away. A vision of the risen Saviour would bring no conviction

to those whose hearts are not filled with love to Him, love ready to believe as genuine, outward grounds of hesitation die away. That is no honest faith which fancies that it sees and believes too soon. That is no honest doubt which shrinks from consequences and doubts too long. That is no real faith which believes only what it sees. That is no honest doubt which repudiates the unseen because it loves it not.

O Jesu, grant that I may rise in faith to lay hold upon Thine eternal truth, that holding I may love, and loving I may enjoy, and enjoying I may be perfected according to the fulness of that love wherewith Thou hast created me in this lower world to rise to the participation of Thy glory in the fellowship of Thy Passion.

My son, look to Me. Lay hold on me. Embrace Me. Hide thyself in Me. Still does My Passion invite thee. While thou sufferest for Me upon the earth thou shouldst feel the brightness of My glory surrounding thee, and the sensitive touch of My wounds shall strengthen thee to endure all things joyfully for My name's sake.

My Lord and my God, let me evermore be Thine. Though I see Thee not with the outward eye, yet shall my heart rejoice to behold Thee. Yea, though Thou be hidden in any forms from which my nature shrinks, yet will I gaze upon Thee with the eye of love, and in the power of faith I will seek to be conformed to Thee.

Blessed are they, My son, who are thus

coming to Me, advancing more and more in blessed experiences of My earthly Passion, My Resurrection life, My Divine glory. Reach to Me thine hand and I will never let it go. Withdraw not thyself from Me and I will never leave thee, but I will show thee more and more of the mysteries of Mine eternal kingdom.

O Blessed Jesu, behold me prostrate before Thee. Nature cannot see Thee in Thy glory, but in the sight which Thy love gives to Thy faithful ones is a surety we shall attain to behold Thee as Thou art, and find our satisfaction in the heavenly vision.

NOTE.

Let us consider what was the exact purpose of St. Thomas in demanding such proof of our Lord's resurrection. The words imply that he recognised the spiritual character of our Lord's risen body. They imply a perception that the marks could not be merely external scars, but that the interior organism was permanently affected by the wounds of the Passion. They imply further that so to touch them would be no renewal of the injury, making the wounds bleed afresh, but that the body although spiritual was in some sense palpable, and although palpable was now invulnerable.

These are important elements for consideration. The body was the same body which hung upon the Cross, but it was now in a very different condition. It had been a natural body, existing according to the laws of life which the soul required. Now it is a spiritual body, existing according to the laws of life which the spirit infuses. Evidently, he seemed to say, it has solidity, but not arising from the close coherence of the material particles by which the soul was sustained, like the density of natural manifestation: no, arising rather from the indiscerptible unity of essence which

the spirit spreads throughout the frame. The body which is the shrine of the soul-life passes into corruption. The body which is the instrument of the spirit-life can no longer see corruption. The body being raised from the dead, no longer needs material elements to supply the flux of decay, that so the frame, though continually perishing, may retain the soul-life within itself. The body being raised from the dead, no longer liable to decay or death, lives by the power of the spirit. Its particles are subject to the laws of spiritual existence. The spirit holds them no longer in a state of flux, but in a condition of self-contained absorption apart from space, so that if manifested in this lower world they may assume their old dimensions not by necessity but by will.

This body was therefore capable of presenting itself to sight and touch, or of lying hidden in a higher region of existence imperceptible to both.

Thomas seems to have felt that the living Lord who had shown him so many mysteries would not now withhold His manifestation. He felt as having a right to claim it, not by reason of anything in himself, but because he knew the unchangeable character of his Lord's love. But he felt that our Lord's body was changed in condition, although His heart was not changed in love. His body, if touched, would not be as a natural body repelling the pressure. It would admit the finger to penetrate the wounds. In being thus handled it would suffer no fresh wounding, but would rather show forth its mysterious glory.

But why should those wounds remain? They remain upon the body of Jesus because they are no mere accidental wounds. The body is a system of forces holding the particles of matter together, whether for the perishing life of the soul or the eternal life of the spirit. Those wounds whereby Jesus had offered Himself lovingly to suffer according to God's will had a moral value. The body is no mere material vessel containing the soul, it is the organic instrument of the moral energies which the soul exerts. The forces of the body acquire their growing perfection by the moral acts which are done in

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the body. The body as a system of forces registers all the acts, whether good or bad, for which those forces have been used. Every function of the body is developed for eternal good or evil by the actions for which it is employed during the life on earth. The hands, therefore, having not merely suffered, but accepted the nailing, must have, for a part of their glory, the marks of what they have endured. Those wounds could not perish. The forces of our Lord's body had been morally exercised in enduring the sufferings of the Crucifixion. The merits of Christ's Passion do not fade away. They do not surround Him in His glory as an external atmosphere, but they radiate from the organs of the body whereby they were wrought, the expression of the developed spiritual life within. Our Lord's hands after the Crucifixion would not be without the marks of the nails. If they were, the merit of the Crucifixion as an inherent glory of His risen nature would have passed away. Christ's body, presented to the Father with all the merits of His Passion, is not found as the body of a soldier who has recovered all the consequences of his wounds and is now returned to natural vigour, but every nerve which felt each special pain retains the mark of that pain as a fresh element of spiritual power whereby it now lives in the attainment of the reward of glory. The marks of the Passion are not mere memorials of past weakness, but instruments of present strength and activity. As cultivated wisdom marks the brow, even in natural life, with lines of intellectual beauty, so the Passion marks the whole body of our risen Lord with the loveliness of redeeming power, and every wound remains upon the spiritual body, no longer a ghastly object on which mortal man has scarcely power to gaze, but an object of entrancing majesty which all who see adore, and adoring, live thereby.

St. Thomas, as he speaks of our Lord's wounds, seems to have had some such thoughts as these. The wounds were no longer to awaken his pity but his adoration. By putting his fingers into the wounds of the nails, he did not so much wish to convince himself of a truth which he doubted, as to obtain

grace for himself in the fellowship of those wounds by which he might himself be lifted up into the glorified life wherewith that Body lived. By the ever-abiding marks of those wounds as centres of spiritual power made perfect through suffering, Jesus lives in the ceaseless exercise of eternal energies whose triumph is our life, our strength, our pattern, and our joy.

That the desire of St. Thomas was dictated by an elevating principle, not an earthly one, is evident from the fact that our Lord accepted it. Had it been the utterance of a carnal sentiment Jesus would have set the desire aside as He did the effort of the Magdalen when she sought to touch Him. Thomas looked forward to heavenly apprehension by the virtue of that touch. Therefore our Lord approved the desire by granting it.

MEDITATION XLVII.

The Work of the Future.

After these things Jesus manifested himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias; and he manifested *himself* on this wise. There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the *sons* of Zebedee, and two other of his disciples. Simon Peter saith unto them, I go a fishing. They say unto him, We also come with thee. They went forth, and entered into the boat; and that night they took nothing. But when day was now breaking, Jesus stood on the beach; howbeit the disciples knew not that it was Jesus. Jesus therefore saith unto them, Children, have ye aught to eat? They answered him, No. And he said unto them, Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and ye shall find. They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes. That disciple therefore whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, It is the Lord. So when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt his coat about him (for he was naked), and cast himself into the sea. But the other disciples came to the little boat (for they were not far from the land, but about two hundred cubits off), dragging the net full of fishes. So when they got out upon the land, they see a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread. Jesus saith unto them, Bring of the fish which ye have now taken. Simon Peter therefore went up, and drew the net to land, full of great fishes, a hundred and fifty and three: and for all there were so many, the net was not rent. Jesus saith unto them, Come and break your fast. And none of the disciples durst inquire of him, Who art thou? knowing that it was the Lord. Jesus cometh, and taketh the bread, and giveth them, and the fish likewise. This is now the third time that Jesus was manifested to the disciples, after that he was risen from the dead.—St. John xxi. 1-14.

1. THE TOIL OF EARTH.

THE disciples having been instructed in the mysterious character of our Lord's risen life might have supposed that they were henceforth to be exempted from their old habits of toil. Living in close dependence upon Jesus, whom they now felt to be so mysteriously near to them, they might well have thought that the glory of His life would overflow to them.

So indeed it was to be. His glory wherein He dwelt would surround them though dwelling upon the earth. It would overflow so as to take them into

its embrace. It would not, however, overflow so as to remove them from the outer necessities which belonged to their life in the world.

Their life was to be henceforth a double life ; a life of earthly toil, and a life of spiritual joy hidden with Christ in God.

How difficult it must have been for them to realise this, to accept at once the powers of the invisible world and the weakness of the visible. The same difficulty meets ourselves. We are apt to think that the fellowship of heavenly gifts ought to set us free from many of the incidents of natural infirmity. But it is not so. The powers of the higher life are not given to us in order to free the present life from its embarrassments. What we need is to learn the lesson which was given to the Apostles during these forty days. As they knew that Christ could appear to them at any moment, and trusted in Him accordingly, so must we do also. We may be sure that whatever He may leave us to suffer, He will interfere so as to protect us from any real harm. Dangers may threaten and troubles accumulate, both bodily and spiritual, but He is watching us unseen, He is near at hand ; He can come forward at any moment to effect our deliverance and to give us success.

We meanwhile have to labour.

Thus it was that the seven Apostles went back to their craft upon the sea of Tiberias. We may notice that besides St. Peter there were those two disciples who had been led to a specially experimental conviction of our Lord's Godhead by finding how He knew the secrets of their hearts—Nathanael the guileless,

Thomas the thoughtful. The two sons of Zebedee were there. Who were absent we cannot say, as the remaining two are unnamed. As there were two disciples of the Baptist, at first unnamed, who followed Christ in the outset of the gospel, so there are here also two nameless ones.

They toiled all night and caught nothing.

We are not to think that the absence of success in any outward work is a token that God has cast us off. Frequently it will be an important part of our spiritual discipline that God should leave us to feel the unchanged character of our earthly estate, in order that we may use the spiritual powers with which He is sending us forth into the world purely and simply as a heavenly trust. Alas! we are apt to think that we have a claim upon God's co-operation in our temporal matters because He calls us of His great mercy to co-operate with Him in the advancement of His eternal kingdom. We are not fit for our work as His stewards until we have put aside all idea of claim upon Him by which we might be thought to be His favourites.

We may perhaps gather that the reason why our Lord spent forty days in companionship with His Apostles after the resurrection was for the very purpose of accomplishing this discipline. His own risen humanity needed not forty days to perfect or to prove it. His meritorious work of obedience was completed on Calvary. The Apostles did need further preparation, and these forty days may be regarded as the days of their further probation in the life of the Spirit before Christ ascended to obtain for them the gifts of power.

They toiled during the night, and all the work of the world is really work of the night. This we must remember. To most of us death is as night closing our work. We ought to know better. The night is far spent, which is our earthly state. The day is at hand, which is the appearing of Jesus Christ.

In our work we need to recognise Jesus standing on the shore. Continually He is there and we 'know not that it is Jesus.' Blessed are the eyes which can recognise His sacred form, and wait not for Him to show Himself by His power, rejoicing as they do in the consciousness of His presence.

'Have ye any meat?' No. Worldly things are not such that the children of the resurrection can feed upon them. We seek and find not. Our own toil can never bring us satisfaction. If it seem to satisfy, it is worse than if we feel our helplessness. 'He filleth the hungry with good things, but the rich He will send empty away.'

O Jesu, I cannot gain by earthly power that which I need. Darkness is ever upon me, and I toil continually in vain. Yet, Lord, I would not have it otherwise. I would not have nature yield to my endeavours, but much rather would I wait to receive everything from Thy love.

My son, look to Me, and see Me standing on the shore while thou toilest. The sight of Me will give thee encouragement.

Yea, Lord, Thou who didst bring Simon to the acknowledgment of Thy Divine Sonship by the teaching of the Spirit, and Nathanael by Thy knowledge

of His actions, and Thomas by the reading of His heart, help me to adore Thine hidden presence, and to behold Thee watching while I toil, not negligent, but waiting till I am found worthy of thine interference.

My son, look up to Me, and thou shalt find that thy heart is the more filled with satisfaction as thy hand finds its toil to be fruitless. Thy labour is not vain which thou dost undertake, believing in Me. Thy faith must now appropriate that which shall hereafter be given thee by Myself in the glory of the coming day.

Even so, Lord. The night passeth away, and the morning cometh when there shall be no more night to follow. In Thy presence is the fulness of joy. They that wait upon Thee shall lack no manner of thing that is good.

2. THE SUPERNATURAL INCREASE.

Jesus bade them cast their net upon the right side of the boat, and now they could not draw it for the multitude of fishes.

This is at once an assurance of the power of Christ to multiply all temporal blessings for His people if they go on toiling in faith, and also a symbol of the heavenly abundance with which He is ready to crown the labours of such as have experienced the continued want of earthly things.

We must be careful to acknowledge all increase of earthly things as being the immediate gift of Christ to us. Otherwise they will be of no avail.

St. John at once knew the Stranger who was hidden from him by the darkness. The sudden abundance did not rivet his attention upon the marvellous treasures of the deep, but made him at once look away to the Giver. So must it be with us.

St. Peter did not stay to secure the haul, but girt his cloak around him and swam to shore. So must we never suffer earthly wealth to hold us back from Jesus, but we must give ourselves to the Giver.

As with earthly things so with heavenly ones. We must not be discouraged because our work may seem to be for a long time fruitless. Probably this miracle contains a prophetic intimation of what shall be in the last days of the Church. Through many centuries of darkness how has Christendom been toiling and finding nothing! We may look for the Stranger to call His Church to some missionary endeavour in the last days.

Peter seems to be the representative of the Jewish Church; John of the Gentile. The movements of the last days may make the Jews at length acknowledge that which the Church Catholic sets before them. 'It is the Lord.' So may we look for the conversion of the Jews, as one of the leading phenomena of the last days, to be the great power whereby the Church shall at length be perfected and the drag-net (St. Matt. xiii. 47) brought to shore.

Simon Peter was naked as the Jews in their ignorance, but when they shall have girded themselves with the righteousness of Christ by faith, leaping into the sea to greet the Lord of glory whom they knew not, then shall they drag the net which

is yet two hundred cubits from the water's edge, and bring the multitude of the redeemed to land as an offering to Christ.

One hundred and fifty and three is the mystical number significant of the redeemed—nine times seventeen. Now shall the Church be seen in her glorious unity. The net filled with fishes could not remain without many a breach during the lapse of time. Now in the glory of the eternal morning, though the fishes are so many there is no schism in the net.

We must not expect to see the Church freed from schisms until the end. We are not to doubt that when it is brought out of the waters of time, it will be found whole and entire, in perfect unity. It will not need to be mended by Apostolic discipline. It will be seen in the perfection of Christ. Now the Church is as the drag-net, filled with bad and good. Then the Church shall be found as this net which was full of great fishes. This net dragged by the seven Apostles represents to us the purified Church, in the perfection of the sevenfold Spirit, perfect in its sanctity as in its unity, worthy of Christ.

O Jesu, as I look to Thee, help me to acknowledge Thy power, to contemplate Thy glory, to bear all things for Thy love, to accomplish all things at Thy command.

Yea, My son, Thou must live simply for Me, and I will gather thee unto Myself that thou mayest share with Me all that is Mine.

O Lord, why do I not see Thee more clearly even now ?

If thou wilt abide in My love thou shalt know that I am the Lord. Fear not therefore. Love must be thy teacher. Love is quick to see. Love is prompt to serve.

O Lord, how can I come to Thee ?

I have called thee, My son, into the priesthood, into the Religious life. Cast thyself into the waters, looking to Me; but take heed that thou make no idle venture. No vocation profits unless the eye of the soul is looking to Me, so that thou mayest seek thereby to draw near to Me.

O Lord Jesu, Thou art my only hope. I know Thou art watching for me to come to Thee. Thou who didst walk upon the waters art now standing on the firm shore of the eternal kingdom. I cannot heed the things of time. My joy is to see Thee on the right hand of God. My effort is to seek after that which Thou dost hold out to me. My security is in the knowledge of Thy love. It is true life to die to the world, true wealth to cast the world aside, true satisfaction and true freedom to find myself a captive of Thy love, falling down to worship at Thy feet.

8. THE RESURRECTION MEAL.

When the disciples come to shore they see a fire of coals, and fish laid thereon, and bread. By the fire of coals we may understand the law of obedience kindled by the fire of the Holy Ghost, that law whereby Christ offered Himself unto the Father. The fish laid thereon is evidently His own most holy Body, for the fish is the special symbol of Himself.

Already we have seen Him eating of a broiled fish. Now the broiled fish is here that His disciples may eat. There is bread likewise, that is to say the sacramental form under which His sacred Body is given. Jesus gives them 'the bread and the fish likewise;' the bread first, for the sacramental form is visible, the fish likewise, for He gives not the empty bread of nature, but along with it the substance of grace.

Simon Peter was standing on the shore when Jesus said 'Bring hither of the fish which ye have caught.' Probably the six disciples who were in the boat threw to him the rope by which the net could be hauled up, while they held the net itself in their grasp lest it should slip back into the deep.

In the earlier miracle, when the nets were broken the fish were taken into the two boats (St. Luke v. 8). That is to say, the Jewish and Gentile Churches, as St. Augustine interprets. Here the fish are not brought into the churches, but are landed upon the shore of eternity.

Peter instructed by John in the boat seems to symbolise the Church of the Circumcision which was specially committed to him. As he stands upon the shore he seems to prefigure some mysterious fellowship in the power of the resurrection which may belong to the Jewish Church in the last days, for the accomplishment of the work of evangelisation. It were too venturesome to attempt any explanation of the manner in which the whole Church shall be brought out of the deep to be with the Lord.

The Apostles had been commanded to bring of the fish which they had caught. It was not that

they were wanted, for, indeed, probably they were not used. It would seem that as there were fish already broiled the meal would be provided from that which Jesus already had. They were to bring it as an offering to Jesus.

So must we bring all our works an offering to Jesus. He needs not our work in order to feed us. He requires us to toil that we may show our claim to be fed as His children, not as if the gift wherewith He feeds us were the result of our own labour. No, He feeds us simply with Himself, with the merits of His Passion, not with the results of our toil. Those very results are the gift of His supernatural power blessing our efforts, and ought to waken our thankfulness. We ought to give them to Him. They are not to be kept by us for ourselves. Nevertheless it is not with these that Jesus feeds us. He feeds us with Himself. If the abundance of His blessing as it rests upon our toil leads us to the oblation of thanksgiving, then He will feed us with His own Divine gift which He Himself has prepared for us in heaven.

This is the breakfast of the resurrection, and therefore evidently signifies the mystery of the holy Eucharist. St. John speaks of this as being the third manifestation, in what sense is doubtful. St. Augustine seems to show us the true meaning when he says that this was the third day on which Jesus manifested Himself, for on the first Easter-day there were many manifestations. On the Sunday after Easter He appeared when Thomas was with them. This is the third day on which any appearance is recorded. We may not improbably consider that it

was the second Sunday after Easter. During the previous week the Apostles had come down to Galilee expecting to meet Jesus. It was very probably after resting on the sabbath that Simon said to the others, 'I go a-fishing.'

The meal evidently is especially significant of the holy Eucharist, for it is the breakfast of the Resurrection.¹ On the former occasion Jesus ate in the presence of His disciples; now it is He who feeds them.

The disciples felt our Lord's presence, but dared not ask Him who He was or how He came there. So do they teach us the reverence with which we should abstain from inquiring into the mode of His presence when He still feeds us with Himself. Enough it is for us to know it is the Lord.

O Jesu, I look not to be fed by any earthly gift that Thou mayest give me, but only by the glory of Thy heavenly Majesty. Thou art the Giver of all earthly abundance. Thou art the food whereby we must be fed. All other food will fail.

Yea, My son, whatever I give thee of earthly things, give all to Me and I will give thee Myself.

Truly, Lord, thus do I look to be nourished by Thee. As I witness Thy loving providence I learn

¹ We should remember that, in our Authorised Version, dinner always signifies what we should nowadays call breakfast, the first meal of the day. Our forefathers had a morning meal called dinner, and an evening meal called supper. The ordinary hours for each being 9 A.M. and 5 P.M.

Thy power, but Thy love none can know unless they feed upon Thee in Thy gifts of grace. Blessed is the food of immortality which Thou givest me with the bread of Thy sacramental manifestation. I cannot ask Thee, Lord, how camest Thou hither? I know it is Thyself who speakest, feedest, nourishest. How shall I not give to Thee all that I have, when Thou in Thy love givest me all that Thou art!

My son, as I give Myself to thee, thou must also give thyself to Me. I feed not with thee, but I would feed upon thee. While thou eatest Me thou attainest to live by Me, for thereby do I Myself live in thee.

Yea, Lord, while I live by feeding upon Thee I die to mine own self. Truly this death is better than life. Sweet food, whereby I become insensible to all the things of earthly life and rise to the knowledge of the sweetness of God.

MEDITATION XLVIII.

The Penitent Perfected in Love.

So when they had broken their fast, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of John, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord: thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs. He saith to him again a second time, Simon, son of John, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord: thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Tend my sheep. He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of John, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him, the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things: thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep.—St. John xxi. 15-17.

1. NATURAL AFFECTION AND DIVINE LOVE.

THE impulsive nature of Simon had been the cause of his failure. He had denied Christ because he had trusted in the strength of his natural affection. Now he is again filled with the intense devotion which that affectionate impulse stirred. Our Lord questions him as to the character of this love. By that questioning he desires to bring the Apostle to the knowledge of Himself. Simon had boasted that his devotion was more trustworthy than that of any of the other Apostles. Now that Jesus is risen he must prove the reality of the claim which the past denials have so sadly falsified.

Jesus, however, demands a higher love than that which natural affection can give. The weakness of nature has been already shown to the Apostle by his failure under trials. Jesus demands a supernatural love which can abide under supernatural assaults.

Love to Christ must be measured not by intensity of feeling, which is apt to deceive, but by Divine inspiration. Since Christ is the Son of the living God, none can love Him truly who are not themselves living in God, for God is love, and everyone that loveth is born of God and knoweth God.

The word therefore which Jesus uses is that word which expresses Divine love. 'Lovest thou Me with the steadfast choice which the Divine wisdom illuminates? Still thou art impulsive in thy demonstrations, casting thyself into the water to hasten towards Me as soon as thou hast heard My name. What is the deeply rooted principle of this love? Thou art eager to surpass those around thee in thy zeal, dost thou love Me with a truer Divine enlightenment? My Father hath revealed to thee that I am the Christ: hast thou obtained from Him the gift of love correspondent with such revelation?'

Peter answered, 'Yea, Lord, Thou knowest the warmth of that affection wherewith I love Thee.'

We may thus paraphrase the words so as to develop the force of the original difference between our Lord's question and Simon Peter's answer.

Peter had not yet come to know his need. Do we know ours? Am I ready to exclaim, 'Thou knowest that I love Thee,' or do I feel how great the demands of true love ever must be, and that my natural impulses cannot rise up to those demands.

Truly we must seek to have the love of Jesus poured into our hearts by the Holy Ghost, otherwise it were impossible for us to love Him worthily.

Not only is the love of Jesus beyond the strength

of nature, but it demands the sacrifice of nature. Until nature is sacrificed the claim of the supernatural is not satisfied. Therefore our Lord speaks of those who would be His disciples as hating all earthly ties and their own life also. He does not mean to refuse natural affection to natural objects, but He would have the supremacy of that which is Divine perfectly recognised, so that everything may be regarded as evil which holds us back from that which He enjoys.

This Divine love is calm, and belongs to a higher region than earthly friendship. Friendship might follow Jesus to the grave. Alas! it had stopped short at the Cross, although its energies returned in a short time; but how could friendship rise to the eternal glory which no human experience can lead us to anticipate? The love which binds us to the risen Saviour must be a supernatural love taught by Himself, proceeding from Himself, even the Holy Ghost, for He unites us to Jesus.

This Divine love towards Jesus is specially developed by fellowship in His risen life. Human affections towards Christ are stirred by the contemplation of His Passion, but the calm adoring love which He requires can only be obtained by the experience of His life holding us up along with Himself in God. Hence arises the great importance of meditating constantly upon His life in glory. A friendship towards Jesus such as St. Peter professed is not sufficient. Our love to Him must rise to the dignity of His heavenly glory, from whence it has its origin.

Men are too apt to dwarf their thoughts of God's

love towards man to the measure of human pity, but God's friendship to man, ' His philanthropy ' (Tit. iii. 4), as manifested in the Incarnation and the Passion, is but the outcome of that eternal love which the Father has for His only Son. He so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son to raise us into correspondence with that love. The lower expression of friendship implies distinct impulse binding distinct persons. The higher expression of love implies the unity of the spirit and of power.

St. Peter still felt that friendship which belongs to natural admiration. Afterwards he could write to the faithful of the dispersion that though they had not seen Christ they loved Him, and rejoiced with joy unspeakable and full of glory (1 Peter i. 8).

As our natural love towards Christ the Redeemer must rise up to the measure of Divine love, so must it be also with our love one to another. Thus St. Peter himself speaks, ' As ye have purified your souls through the Spirit unto unfeigned brotherly kindness, see that ye love one another out of a pure heart fervently ' (1 Peter i. 22). ' Add to brotherly kindness [Divine] love ' (2 Peter i. 7).

So must the natural affections be filled with the glory of the Divine spirit of love if we would be with Christ as the true companions of His risen life. We must die to our natural zeal and impetuosity, and live in the sweetness of His renewing grace.

O Jesu, grant me evermore to love Thee.

My son, let not thyself be deceived by any natural emotions of love. Be watchful, that thou

mayest rise to dwell with Me in the embrace of Mine own glory.

O Lord, I long to know Thy love which passeth knowledge, that seeing Thee as Thou art I may love Thee in very truth.

My son, if thou wouldst attain to that love as thine abiding portion, thou must purify thy heart by obedience to My truth now amidst the discipline of life, rejoicing with a joy unspeakable amidst all the events of this outer world, because thou knowest Me and canst rely upon Me.

Even so, dear Lord. Do with me what Thou wilt, for I know Thou lovest me. In accepting Thy love I learn what that love is. That which I do can never make me worthy of Thy love, but that which Thou doest shall indeed make me pure, that I may be dead to my own self and live to Thee. Therefore I give myself to Thee that I may learn to love Thee with a love which now I cannot know, and in that love may rise never more to be separated from Thee in the glory of Thy resurrection.

2. THE RESTORATION OF THE PENITENT.

Our Lord's threefold interrogation plainly has reference to St. Peter's threefold denial.

So is it with us all. Every sin into which we fall, of thought, word, or deed, needs a special act of Jesus for its removal. In the discipline of life Jesus as it were examines us as to our past faults. He does not merely punish in a general way for the

whole period of sin, but He requires us by individual acts of penitence, in correspondence with His own interrogating love, to undo as it were each act of sin that has been committed in the life that is past.

If this individualising is not accomplished now it must be done in the day of judgment, the resurrection morning, ere we can receive the blessed bidding, 'Follow Me.'

No dignity of station among Christ's people can exempt us from the humiliating discipline which our sins require, no zeal can take its place. The great Apostle must know this individual penitence as truly as the lowest in station amongst Christ's members.

'Lovest thou Me?' That inquiry develops the hatred of the sin whereby that love was wounded. All true love which would follow Christ now in active service, or hereafter in the fellowship of glory, must be purified and perfected by penitence. 'We love Him because He first loved us' (1 St. John iv. 19). That love has been shown to us in our redemption, and we learn it unceasingly as deepening penitence brings us to fuller knowledge of its exhaustless mystery.

'Peter was grieved because He said unto him the third time, Hast thou a real affection for Me?'

In the third interrogation our Lord adopted the word of St. Peter, and questioned him no longer as to the Divine love which He required, but as to the natural affection which the Apostle professed.

Such repeated questioning grieved the Apostle, and still more the doubt which was thrown upon

that natural love which he so confidently asserted.

Our Lord teaches us hereby that natural affection is not to be destroyed by the higher principle of love. Such affection is the shrine of individualising personal relationship. The impulses of natural relationship are not sufficient for the energies of Divine love, but when they are perfected in the unity of the Eternal Spirit they will remain in the integrity of their created nature. As we rise to love God in the unity of the Holy Ghost, we shall not cease to love Him with the individuality of personal consciousness. On the contrary, our nature will be purified by obedience to the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned affection towards the brethren, and towards Christ, and towards God (1 Peter i. 22). We shall not lose personality when we rise again, so as to be absorbed into the infinite Divine essence of the eternal love, but as in that eternal essence 'the Father has personal regard for His Son' (John v. 20), so we also shall retain the personal love of Christ which we have acquired by the discipline of earth.

Peter thought that he had already a true devotion to Christ, ready to do all things for Him. The grief awakened by this third question seems to be the final purifying act whereby he came to the knowledge of himself and his weakness, that he might love his Lord, rejoicing rather to accept the love of Christ than to exhibit any zealous affection of his own.

In this third question our Lord does not retire from the high demand of love which the earlier questions put forward, but He accepts the Apostle as

rising up towards Himself. His natural affections henceforth shall be purified. They shall be acknowledged as the true exponent of that Divine love which is the law of eternal life to all whom Jesus accepts in the glory of His resurrection.

O Jesu, let me not be grieved at Thy discipline, but let me be purified that I may walk in Thy love.

Be assured, My son, that by this discipline I am drawing thee nearer to Myself. I ask not of thy love as if I knew not all things. I question thee in order that I may bring thee to know thyself. Blessed art thou if thou knowest how truly I know all things. Yea, verily, I search the heart and the reins. When thou knowest thyself as I know thee, thou shalt love Me according to that knowledge. Truly I know thee by loving thee, for had I not loved thee I had not created thee. In love I created thee. In love I redeemed thee. And as thou knowest the sin from which thou art redeemed thou dost learn the love wherewith I have restored thee. So shalt thou for ever contemplate the love to which I call thee. So shalt thou love Me. So shalt thou satisfy the yearnings of My love.

O Jesu, Jesu, evermore let me abide in Thy love. The love wherewith I shall love Thee henceforth is only the return of the love wherewith Thou hast loved me for ever. O let that love be the law of my life upon the earth, that I fail not of it in the day of Thine appearing.

3. DUTY THE TEST OF LOVE.

‘ If ye keep My commandments ye shall abide in My love, even as I have kept My Father’s commandments and abide in His love ’ (St. John xv. 10). This was the rule of love which Jesus had already given. Now He applies it to the case of the penitent Apostle.

Natural affection and zeal were still urging Peter to attempt things different from others, but Jesus bids him rest satisfied in the simple fulfilment of the duty belonging to his office.

The threefold charge which our Lord gave him is sometimes spoken of as if it were a restoration to the office from which he had fallen, but his fall had not involved the loss of his office. It is (as the Greek Fathers say) in a sort of way a restoration to his office, for it is an injunction to fulfil its duties, but the form of speech is imperative, not designative. No new power is implied in these words. They are not spoken in order to convey a trust, but by way of admonition they call the Apostle to the fulfilment of an obligation. They are a charge, but they are not a commission.

The penitent is apt to long for some fresh form of service. We may learn from these words of Christ to find abundant opportunity for the exercise of love in caring for what He has already given us to keep.

‘ Feed My lambs.’ The truest penitence will show itself first of all in the humblest acts of duty.

‘Tend My sheep.’ That is to say, shrink not from any of the weary toil which belongs to the shepherd’s office. The penitent must be prepared for the constant service night and day which in God’s providence may come to him. The shepherd life has not the busy speculative excitement which belongs to the fisherman. The one knows not when the storm may come, nor when he may look for an abundant draught. The other knows his sheep and watches over them with constant solicitude, providing for their several necessities.

Yes! the sheep are to be tended, and yet not chiefly for their own sake. They are the flock of Jesus, and the love of Jesus is the secret of apostolic diligence.

So must the love of Jesus be the sustaining power strengthening the penitent with perseverance.

‘Feed My sheep.’ The shepherd’s care involves much weariness and toil, and the necessity of feeding the flock abides. So must the penitent’s love be continuous. It cannot be shown upon emergencies and sink into forgetfulness at other times. The dangers of the flock are uncertain. The needs of hunger never cease.

Such is the love wherein the penitent is perfected. We are not sanctified by acts which gratify ourselves, but by our watchfulness in performance of the duties which satisfy the hunger of Jesus while He longs for the fruit of our labour. The flocks are His flocks. In all the acts of daily duty one towards another, we are doing them to Him.

O Jesu, let me show my love to Thee in all the simple acts of my daily calling. Never let me forget that Thou requirest my service in these things. Never let me do anything without the remembrance of Thee.

My son, I have called thee out of the world that thou mayest live devoted to Me. Rejoice to be hidden, for I am watching thee. By night and by day be thou evermore occupied in the work of My love.

O Lord Jesu, I will not henceforth seek for myself any of the greatness of the world. Nothing that this world can give shall ever merit Thy reward. Those whom Thou hast called out of the world Thou givest to me that I may feed them. Thou who feedest Thy flock among the lilies of heavenly grace wilt never suffer me to want while I tend them amidst the dreary expanse of this world's wilderness. My joy shall ever be to be with Thee and care for what is Thine.

NOTE.

It may be well to exhibit the difference of words used by our Lord and St. Peter :—

- | | | |
|-------------------|----------------------|---------------------------------------|
| St. John xxi. 15. | Lovest thou Me ? | Thou knowest that I <i>love</i> Thee. |
| „ | 16. Lovest thou Me ? | Thou knowest that I <i>love</i> Thee. |
| „ | 17. Lovest thou Me ? | Thou knowest that I <i>love</i> Thee. |

The word translated 'love' is rather of choice, judgment, approval. The other word, represented by '*love*,' expresses more natural affection.

MEDITATION XLIX.

Following Jesus.

Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldst: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldst not. Now this he spake, signifying by what manner of death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me.—St. John xxi. 18, 19.

1. WEAKNESS.

ALREADY had Simon Peter avowed his desire to follow Jesus, even although that should require him to lay down his life for Jesus' sake (St. John xiii. 37). The desire had been accepted, although it was made with little consciousness of how much it really involved, little knowledge of the speaker's feebleness of will. His zeal, his animal strength, was full of vigour. He knew not as yet that something more was necessary in order to follow Jesus in truth.

Now Jesus calls Peter to follow Him. The lesson has been learnt. We may well understand that the threefold questioning has brought the Apostle now to that enlightenment which penitence alone can give. He knows himself as he never knew himself before. He knows and trusts his Lord.

Jesus points him onward to a time when nature shall be weak. Then shall grace be strong. That weakness is no hindrance to the following of Jesus. That strength will be all-sufficient.

The time, however, is not yet. He shall be old. The words may have aroused his confidence when he slept between two soldiers in the prison. Herod could not take away his life until his time was come. As he lived year after year, battling with many a weary difficulty, he may perhaps have felt these words weighing upon his eager spirit with a sad imprisoning power. Life here on earth was a lingering discipline which he must work out to the end, and that end was still so far away! The end for him could not be yet. Nevertheless he was all the while learning to accept this discipline. As nature looked forward to the lingering trial he learnt to die to the world. As his righteous soul, vexed by the present sorrows, looked forward to the end which awaited him, he felt the energy of the Divine life taking possession of him, so that in due time he might go forth and follow Jesus, not in the letter only, but also in the truth of the Eternal Spirit.

To die by his own will had been no true martyrdom. The hero may choose some glorious environments of death wherein to make a plunge into the world beyond, having some purpose of political triumph which he hopes to leave behind him as his memorial upon earth. The Christian martyr cannot die by his own choice, although in the strength of grace he may rejoice while others bind him for his doom. There was only One who could rightly lay down His soul, for He alone had power to take it again, and even He died as it were by the compulsion of others, because He would have us learn in death to follow Him.

By the acceptance of the long-continued weakness the great Apostle must learn to accept death when it should come as being his Lord's true gift to him.

In that day his will would have ceased to act, for he would know no will but the will of Jesus. We are not to think that there would be any reluctancy of soul which should make the aged saint shrink from following Jesus. He would know Jesus to be with him here. He would go hence to be with Jesus there. He would feel the strength of Jesus while ministering to the Body of Christ upon the earth, and he knew that there was no one to take his place when he was gone. Like the companion of his martyrdom, he was 'in a strait betwixt two' (Phil. i. 28). His life was a continued struggle with Satan, and the words of his Lord spoken in the agony, when the vigorous Apostle slept, overcome by the very vehemence of his sympathetic sorrow, would dictate the law of his self-oblation, 'Not as I will, but as Thou wilt.'

Even so must all the perplexities of life be met by us. Blessed is that weakness of nature which leaves the will free to be simply passive amidst the external discipline of God's providence, while it acts in joyous subordination to the interior guidance of the Holy Ghost. Too weak to choose, we learn to obey.

The will which in self-distrust accepts God's will shall ever be found more effectual for abiding acts of triumph than the will which is always busy to press upon God how it shall glorify Him. If God's will is our law, it will be our strength.

O Jesu, let me have no will but Thine.

My son, truly shalt thou be blessed when thou hast accepted **M**y will altogether. Nevertheless thou must not shrink from the pain which is necessary if thy own will is to die within thee. It is a lifelong discipline whereby thou must attain this spirit of meekness which shall make thee meet for martyrdom.

O Lord Jesu, cannot I put my own will altogether away and give myself to Thee? Surely for this purpose have I come into the Religious life, that I may have no longer any will of my own.

Thou desirest well, **M**y son, but it needs many years of hard training to acquire that end for which thou hast come hither. The mortification of the body is no easy matter, but much more painful is the mortification of the will. By many repeated acts of self-abnegation thou must die unto thyself. So shalt thou become a true Religious. Yea, thou shalt be equal with **M**y martyred saints, for by the mortification of thy will thou dost become fit for martyrdom, and the death of **M**y saints is not dear unto Me because of any dignity of outward accident. I delight therein because they have already died unto the world, and now they come to Me.

O Lord Jesu, I will indeed seek by the power of Thy Holy Spirit so to mortify the natural inclinations of my fleshly mind that I may live with Thee. Whatever be the discipline which Thou dost appoint for me, whether it be the misapprehension and scorn of those whose love I value, or the waywardness of those

with whom I work, or the seeming hardness of superiors, or the poverty of outward circumstances and the absence of things necessary in Thy service, or the weariness of bodily exhaustion, or the embarrassment of mental infirmity, help me to accept all as coming from Thee, that I may rejoice not to have my own will gratified, but to be simply in all things dependent upon Thee.

So, My son, shall all be well with thee, and thou shalt follow Me.

O Lord Jesu, I can only follow as Thou callest. Speak, for Thy servant heareth. Step by step let me hear Thy blessed voice still saying, Follow Me !

2. GLORIFYING GOD.

We glorify God if we die to ourselves. No death were to God's glory if the natural self remained unmortified.

When Peter desired to follow Jesus of old he thought rather of his own honour as Christ's disciple than of glorifying God by his death. He thought of Jesus rather as the human leader, although he had acknowledged Him as the Son of the living God. When he spake of death he knew not the triumph of the Cross, nor the sweet welcome of the Father's love which awaited the Only-begotten. He felt scorn for himself if he could be untrue to such a Master, but he knew not the issues of death, the glory of the resurrection-life which should spring out of the grave, the glory which should spread lustre through the ranks of heaven as Jesus and His

followers died to the world and took their place upon the Eternal Throne. He had said, 'That be far from Thee, Lord.' He now begins to know that death is not the evil from which Jesus and His loved ones shrink. The very purpose for which they came into the world is that they may die to it and glorify God.

How apt we are to think that saints have glorified God by their death, but that our death cannot glorify God because we are not saints. We want to do something before we die in order to make up for the want of saintliness which in our inmost hearts we feel. True; we cannot glorify God by our death unless we are His saints. But equally true; unless we are His saints nothing that we can do in life will glorify Him. We may glorify ourselves by doing great things, but if we would glorify God and have glory with Him, we must rather rejoice to do little things. In them God is most truly manifested, for in them our love to God is least diluted by considerations of earth which are unworthy of Him.

O Jesu, grant that I may live and die to the glory of God.

My son, live to the glory of God day by day in those things which I give thee to do. So shalt thou be brought to glorify God more and more. As I see thee profiting by the small occasions of glorifying the Father, so will I give thee greater power of doing so. Thou wouldst begin by something great. I desire to

lead thee onward from matters that are not noticed until thou art equal to the accomplishment of what is beyond thine imagination. Follow Me, and I will guide surely, that thou mayest glorify God.

O Lord Jesu, if I knew whereby I might glorify God, then could I do all things. I am dissatisfied with little things because I do not see whither they will lead.

My son, thou must trust in Me. I see all that awaits thee though thou seest not. Delay not. Refuse nothing, but in everything consider how thou mayest most truly glorify God thereby.

Jesu, it seems to me as if all opportunities were past. Thou wouldst have led me onward to God's glory had I been true to Thee of old. But how canst Thou lead me now?

Fear not, My son. I called Mine Apostle to follow Me though he had sinned. Still do I call thee, though time after time thou hast despised My call. Humble thyself for that which thou hast forfeited, and press onward to obtain that which I still set before thee.

How great is Thy love, most merciful Jesu. Guide me, for Thou knowest whither. Yea, Thou preparest each place of sojourn for me as Thou ledest me onward. I seek not to know whither Thou wilt lead me, but I desire never to lose sight of Thee that I may follow Thee truly.

3. FOLLOWING CHRIST.

At length the Apostle is called to follow Christ. While Jesus was upon the earthly side of the grave He would not suffer Peter to follow. Had Peter followed Jesus only as a dying Saviour he would have perished in this following. Now is Christ risen from the dead. Now He calls Peter to follow Him, for the grave has lost its power. Those who follow Jesus the risen Saviour live with the life wherein He Himself is risen again.

Jesus has destroyed him that had the power of death, and yet none can follow Jesus save by dying. We cannot meet Him that died and find our entrance into His kingdom by some other way, so as to escape the grave. We must follow Jesus step by step along the way of sorrows, the blood-stained highway of the holy Cross. Thus dying we enter into life, but we cannot have eternal life unless we part with the life of earth. We are buried with Christ by Baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised by the glory of the Father, so we also may walk in newness of life (Rom. vi. 4). In every suffering, disease, weakness, death, let us see Jesus standing before us. We look through the opened gate of the grave to where He ministers at the right hand of God. The voice which calls us to follow Him fills the grave with the majesty of His triumph, so that we may be transformed into the image of the living Saviour even by the power of His Spirit. The grave is a triumphal gateway on the road along which Jesus went before.

The power of death is not destroyed except for those who through death look to Jesus the ever-living. Never must we allow ourselves in any path of seeming glory unless it lead through the grave of Jesus.

Continually are we tempted to think that we may have the glory of Jesus without the suffering. But it cannot be. Whatever He gives us in this world He gives us as a help that we may die to the world. The only true enjoyment is through death, and any earthly enjoyment which does not bind us to Jesus in some form of mortification hinders some gift of the joy which is beyond.

How ready we are to put this away from ourselves in practice although we acknowledge it in theory! Satan is ever striving to make us think that some form of earthly joy will help us to the life eternal, as if Jesus had trodden the way of sorrows in order that we might pass onward to heaven by a pathway of pleasure. Visions of earthly heavens rise up before our minds continually, and we find it hard to put away the thought of them. They mock us with a seeming reality, like the mirage of the desert.

Still we must be listening to the voice which calls us, Follow Me, and still it leads us through the chambers of the world's condemnation and mocking to the pillar of the scourging, to the Cross of shame outside the camp; to the loneliness, the nakedness, the pain, the darkness, the desolation, the feebleness, the thirst, of Calvary.

O Lord, shall I draw back from following Thee?

O strengthen me, that I may persevere unto the end. Not in the accomplishment of that which I have planned would I seek to triumph, but in the fellowship of that which Thou hast suffered I will feel sure of victory.

Yea, My son. Take courage. Follow Me!

Surely though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil, for Thou, Lord Jesu, art with me: Thy rod and Thy staff comfort me.

Look thus to Me, My son, and follow Me.

Surely, O Lord, in the midst of this great darkness I find a glow of heavenly light shining upon me. Through the grave as I enter into it I feel the bright and kindly lustre of the life beyond. As I see Thee there I find myself refreshed.

Yea, My son, look unto Me and be saved. Still follow Me.

O Lord, while I hear Thy voice the visions of earth's brightness pass away, and I see no brightness anywhere save in the grave, from which at first I shrank.

Yea, My son, thou shalt see greater things than these. Still follow Me.

O Jesu, as darkness and sorrow come round about me, I seem to have visions of glory which are not of earth, and to hear words such as no human lips could utter.

Yea, My son. Come up hither, step by step, where I have trodden. I will show thee mysteries of eternal life if thou wilt follow Me.

O Lord Jesu, would that I had wings like a dove to flee away, for surely Thou callest me still to the land which is very far off.

It is far, My son, from those who live to the world, but if thou art dying to the world thou hast not far to go. I will uphold thee. Follow Me.

O Lord, there are many enemies through whom I have to pass. Shall I not fear the pains of death and the powers of hell?

Yea, My son, fear nothing, for I will be with thee. When thou goest through the fires I will be with thee, and through the waters they shall not overwhelm thee.

O Lord Jesu, how sweet it is to die along with Thee. O let me die unto the world day by day, that I may live with Thee eternally. Sweet it is to die with Thee in this world of sin. What shall it be to live with Thee where sin shall be no more?

Arise, My son, for from the mountain of myrrh and from the hill of frankincense I will conduct thee to the everlasting heights where thou shalt see all My beauty. Multitudes wait upon Me there, rejoicing in My brightness. All of them have trodden the way of sorrow and of death even as thou. Fear not therefore. Follow Me.

Yea, Lord, I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest, if only Thou wilt be my strength, my guide, my life. O let every other voice die from mine ears. One only voice I desire to hear, Thine own voice, ever saying Follow Me.

MEDITATION L.

Tarrying for Jesus to Come.

Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved, following; which also leaned back on his breast at the supper, and said, Lord, who is he that betrayeth thee? Peter therefore seeing him, saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do? Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me. This saying therefore went forth among the brethren, that that disciple should not die: yet Jesus said not unto him, that he should not die; but, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?—St. John xxi. 20-23.

1. THE COMING OF THE KINGDOM.

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST had opened his ministry with the announcement that the kingdom of heaven was at hand. So also had Jesus Himself spoken. The disciples were familiar with the idea of our Lord's future manifestation from the very first. Indeed when we put together the proclamation of the approaching kingdom and the declaration of Jesus as being the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world, we seem already from the very outset to see the vision rising up before us which many years afterwards was vouchsafed to the aged exile of Patmos, when he saw the throne set in heaven, and in the midst of the throne a Lamb as it had been slain (Rev. v. 7).

Even the thief upon the cross had sufficient knowledge of Messiah's claims to look forward to Christ's coming, and on the eve of His Passion Jesus had spoken to His chosen Apostles in detailed pro-

phesy of ' His own coming and of the end of the world ' (St. Matt. xxiv. 8).

In meditations upon that prophecy we have already seen that the coming of Christ includes the whole Christian dispensation from the fall of Jerusalem to the second appearance of our Lord personally manifested in glory.¹ If Christian readers find so much difficulty in understanding that prophecy, clear as it is, much less could the Apostles be expected to anticipate the events by which it should be fulfilled. They must have had very imperfect conceptions of the future. Even on the very morning of the Ascension they seem to have asked our Lord ' if He would at that time restore again the kingdom to Israel ' (Acts i. 6).

The coming of Christ, however, was a fact which stood out before their minds with a certainty which was at least equal to its obscurity. Of the fact they could not doubt, although what the fact would prove to be they could not tell.

It was plainly also, in some sense or other a transition from an earthly to a heavenly rule. Out of the embers of Judaism was to rise a spiritual kingdom in which the promises to David should find their accomplishment.

With what amount of speed this new kingdom would fill the world, and what would be the agencies by which it should be extended, could not be foreseen. Probably the minds of those who heard could in no way have realised the sudden dispersion of the light of truth, like the morning spread upon the mountains,

¹ *Final Passover*, vol. i. pp. 476-580.

by which the then known world should so quickly respond to the Sun of Righteousness. Nor, again, could they realise that He whose coming was thus mysteriously worldwide in its primary stage could suffer so many an age to pass away ere His kingdom should be perfected by the slow processes of individual selection and probation, ere the final outburst of the heavenly glory should put to flight all the antagonisms of earth and hell. Although the Jews had a tradition that there would be two thousand years of Messiah before the end of the world, yet none could have anticipated that these two thousand years should be years of so much struggle, marred by so much sin. Man's eager heart would look forward to the reign of Christ, as some Christians do still look forward to a millennial time of purity, and as heathen poets, catching their inspiration from Jewish teachers, looked forward to a return of the golden age, as if the coming of Christ must be a time of outwardly triumphant sanctity, a sudden outburst as when the daylight breaks in a tropical latitude, without the preceding hours of lengthened twilight which prepare the way for it in northern climes.

It was not unnatural, then, that the disciples should identify this coming of Christ with the consummation of all things, and suppose that the beloved disciple who was to witness its beginning would have his place amongst those who should not sleep, but should be caught up in the clouds to be for ever with the Lord (1 Cor. xv. 57; 1 Thess. iv. 17).

Our Lord's words do plainly indicate a certain distinction between the two Apostles. He who was to follow Christ was to be actively engaged in an immediate ministry before the Jewish dispensation was finally swept away. The other was to tarry till Christ should come, and his ministry, nursed in secret during the earlier period, was at Christ's coming to develop in some new form of power. The promise to each does exactly set forth what each should do. The ministry of the Circumcision, the Jewish Church, was specially committed to St. Peter (Gal. ii. 7), as that of the Uncircumcision was to St. Paul. Accordingly, St. Peter's Epistles are addressed by name to the Jewish Christians, the strangers of the dispersion throughout Pontus and other districts. After St. Peter and St. Paul had received the glory of martyrdom, St. John comes forth from his retirement. The Jewish temple had ceased to be. Jerusalem reduced to a desolation testified to the judgment of God and the glory of Christ. The beloved disciple now at length told forth in strains of Divine power how the Divine glory had been working in Christ even during His earthly ministry, and pointed onwards in mystical utterances to the glory of a new dispensation, a multitude gathered 'out of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues' (Rev. vii. 9), who should be perfected through manifold vicissitudes until the great city, the holy Jerusalem, should be seen descending out of heaven from God, and Christ should come in the midst thereof, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the Light of it (Rev. xxi. 10, 28).

St. John would succeed to St. Peter as the

Catholic dispensation took the place of the earlier Jewish form of the Christian Church. The Jewish settlements had afforded a nucleus for congregations of Jewish believers in the principal cities of the empire. Only when they put the faith away from themselves would the message be given to the Gentiles as taking their place. When the forty years of trial closed which were to elapse before the final doom of the Holy City, St. Peter would have finished his ministry. The Blessed Virgin would no longer need the care of the beloved disciple. He lingering alone upon earth of all the apostolic band would witness Christ's coming, a vision which would indeed have been a vision of sadness had not that coming still shone out before him in bright expectations of yet future promise. A new stage of Divine manifestation had begun, but in the midst of it he would still be crying continually, 'Lord Jesus, come quickly.'

O Jesu, teach me to behold Thee coming to Thy people in all the wonders of Thy grace.

My son, the world seeth Me not, but blessed are thine eyes if they see Me, for as thou seest Me now thou shalt see Me in ways that are to thee as yet unknown. I will come to thee and show thee all the glory which is Mine in the Bosom of the Father.

Show me Thy glory, most loving Lord. That which man of old could not see lest he die, even that show Thou unto me now that I may live.

Yea, My son, to whomsoever I come I give

life, and none can live unless I come to him, for life is to be found only in Me.

O Lord, I rejoice at Thy coming. I watch for it. Lord, why tarriest Thou? Purify my heart that I may see Thee in Thy truth and learn the nothingness of all things in the light of Thy presence. Reveal Thyself within me that I may see Thee in Thy truth and love Thee with a perfect love.

2. THE WAITING TIME.

St. Peter would live to be an old man. St. John had yet many years, even beyond St. Peter's death, to wait for Jesus.

What is the purpose of life but to wait for Jesus?

The people of the world do not speak of their life with reference to what comes after it, but with reference to that which can be done while it lasts. Such an estimate, however, is not true. The true result of life is not what we leave behind us, but what we carry away within ourselves. This is the principle of strength which sustains us that we may meet Christ.

The long years of St. John's waiting are not promised him that he might enjoy this world the longer. Rather that he might have a life of discipline more thoroughly perfected, a love more deeply tried, a power of Divine intuition more intensely purified.

Jesus keeps none waiting except that they may be fitted as time goes on for higher modes of service. The announcement to St. John contained an assurance of progressive sanctification which should enable

him to welcome Christ in truth and power greater than as yet.

If waiting times are not times of progress to us the fault is our own. If we keep Christ's commandments we shall abide in His love, and by that continued love there will ever be a growing experience of His truth.

If we would abide until Christ come, we must abide in Christ, for Christ's manifestation is the object of our expectation, the reward of our delay, the life of our endurance.

So many years of this world's weary service might seem a hard prospect, but in the thought of Jesus this hardness is changed into joy, and what seems long to nature in her slavish working is but as a moment for grace to carry out the efforts of true love. The seven years that Jacob served for Rachel 'seemed but as a few days for the love which he had for her' (Gen. xxix. 20). So is it with the soul which in the grace of Christ tarries for Christ. The blessedness of His coming is as sure as if He were already here. The Spirit of Christ expands the soul with mighty energies of expectation which cause the more delight as they increase, for the soul knows well that the reality shall surpass all that has been conceived. The soul knows herself to be growing during the waiting time, and the discipline of sorrow is but the enlargement of her capacity for joy.

How mysterious are those years of hidden life which St. John lived upon the earth, a period of more than half a century from the time of his going up with St. Peter, when the lame man was healed

at the Beautiful Gate of the temple, to the time when at the request of the elders at Ephesus he wrote his Gospel. That Gospel of the Incarnation was as it were a new era to the Christian Church. The life which in the earlier Gospels was as the springtide sap, a mystery of hidden power clothing the forest with its tender green, now burst as with the exuberance of summer glory into the full splendour of theological statement. Christ indeed had come, not only in the manifestation of judgment upon Jerusalem, but in the proclamation of Divine power to His Church. 'He had come unto His own and they received Him not, but as many as received Him,' of whatever nation they were born, 'to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His Name' (St. John i. 11, 12). Other Apostles in their Epistles had enforced the consequences of the truth. Now in the fourth Gospel the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ is exhibited bearing the Divine Majesty while still ministering as a man amongst men. The Lamb of God is presented to our view, the true participant of the Eternal Throne even whilst humbling Himself in earthly life, as truly as in the Apocalypse afterwards in His heavenly triumph.

O Jesu, strengthen me that I may patiently abide until Thou hast proved me. I ask not that the time should be shortened, but that I may be perfected therein according to Thy will.

My son, abide with Me and I will keep thee until I have made thee worthy of Myself.

O Lord Jesu, I know that as Thou hast begun a

good work within me, Thou wilt perfect it until the day of Thine appearing. Help me so to correspond with Thy grace that in that day I may be found perfect and entire, wanting nothing.

8. THE PREPARATION.

The waiting disciple is described in a threefold manner.

He is the disciple whom Jesus loved. This love was no mere love as arising from human friendship. It was the love of God. It implied the response of love on his part. Peter professed a strong natural affection for Jesus. John lost sight of himself in the brightness of that love which Jesus had for him. So must it be with those who are called to wait for Jesus. Let each one of us often remember, Jesus loves *me*.

He lay in the bosom of Jesus at the Supper. Peter seems to have had the place of greater dignity. We know there was a strife amongst them how they should be placed at that meal. John had that place which he most valued, nearest to Jesus. Personal closeness of intercourse with Jesus is that which must prepare us for the gift of perseverance amidst long-continued trial. The knowledge of having lain in His bosom will strengthen the heart amidst weary waiting till He come again.

He it is who said, 'Lord, which is he that betrayeth Thee?' Such a question arose not from idle curiosity nor malevolent partisanship. He to whom Jesus could confide such a secret would be true to Jesus in the love wherewith that secret should be

kept. Amidst the calamity of manifold defection and corruption which the Church of Christ must suffer, the soul finds a stay in the foreknowledge of Jesus. These things have I told you, that when the time shall come ye may remember that I told you of them.' The knowledge that all that happens has been known to Jesus will stablish the soul in many a time of perplexity. We must look forward to the future not with human anticipation but with Divine guidance, humbly waiting upon the word of Jesus. He to whom the traitor was designated has told us of the troubles by which the outward face of Christendom would be marred ere the Bride of Christ could appear in her predestined glory. 'Blessed is he that readeth and they that hear the words of this prophecy and keep those things which are written therein, for the time is at hand' (Rev. i. 8).

The faithful soul abides in the love, the fellowship, the wisdom, of Jesus.

O Lord Jesu, blessed be Thy Name who callest me to abide with Thyself. Ever let me lean upon Thy breast. In the sacraments of Thy Church let me experience Thy personal love while I rest upon the heart of Thy humanity. Lift Thou up the light of Thy countenance upon me in the fulness of Thy Divine glory. Thy love brought me out of nothing. Let Thy love bring me to Thy glory. Thou hast bound me to Thyself in mystery. Let me be Thine in Thy manifestation.

© **My son, always think how I have loved thee. So shall thou learn more and more to love Me.**

O Lord, Thy love shows me my unworthiness and encourages me to persevere.

Yea, My son, if thou wilt keep My commandments thou shalt abide in My love, but if thou abide not in My love thou must fail.

O set me as a seal upon Thine heart, as a seal upon Thine arm, for love is strong as death. Yea, Thou callest me to die for Thee, but Thou hast conquered death. No earthly love can hold me back from Thee, my risen Lord. Thou being risen from the dead dost love me still, and in the quickening power of Thy resurrection I hear Thee calling and I call Thee in return. Make haste, my beloved Lord, on the mountain of spices where Thine own merits fill all heaven with the fragrance of an eternal benediction. I rejoice to look up to Thee while I wait for Thee. Though nature be ready to sink amidst long years of trial, yet I hear the voice of my Beloved, and He saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

MEDITATION LI.

The Kingdom of the Regeneration.

But the eleven disciples went into Galilee unto the mountain where Jesus had appointed them. And when they saw him they worshipped him: but some doubted. And Jesus came to them and spake unto them saying, All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you; and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.—
St. Matt. xxviii. 16-20.

Then he appeared to above five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain until now, but some are fallen asleep.—1 Cor. xv. 6.

1. THE MOUNTAIN IN GALILEE.

OUR Lord had appointed to meet His disciples in Galilee on a mountain which was evidently well known. We may believe it to have been the mountain of the Beatitudes. He comes here to receive the homage of His people as their king. Where could that be so suitably given Him as on the spot where so many of them had assembled to hear the law of the kingdom enunciated; that law which had been not only given from His lips but exhibited in His life for all to follow.

St. Matthew tells us that the Eleven went down according to His appointment to Galilee, but we cannot be wrong in supposing that this really was the occasion of which St. Paul speaks, when He was seen

of more than five hundred brethren at once. The very words of St. Matthew imply the larger audience, although they do not mention it.

It would seem not unnatural to suppose that the previous interview by the lake had taken place on the second Sunday after Easter, and that this royal demonstration took place upon the third. The unforeseen meeting would prepare the hearts of the disciples for this formal inauguration of the kingdom. Many were amongst them whose hearts were still distrustful. Each step was of importance in order to establish the confidence which such an interview required. The great draught of fishes was not without its purpose as a tangible proof that this appearance to the seven was a reality. Men might have doubted whether He really had served them as He seemed to do with the fish which was found broiling on the fire. The wondrous spoil gathered from the lake would make them all participate in the bounty of their risen Lord. The nets which were exhibited unbroken told a tale of mystery.

Those who but a few days ago had been present in Jerusalem, and had found the crucifixion following so rapidly upon the triumphal entry in which they had themselves had part, must have needed some encouragement to recall their loyalty and revive their hopes. It is impossible for us, living amidst the traditions of many centuries, to put ourselves back into the position of those who had seen their great leader hurried away to death by the combined powers of the Temple and the Prætorium as a criminal forsaken even by His most trusty adherents.

If the very Apostles found it difficult to rise to the acceptance of the truth, although they had such clear accounts of His appearance alive to many of their number, what must have been the difficulty for these Galileans. As wondering throngs came round the boat to buy such fish as the lake had never previously yielded, while other fishermen would tell of the same night as having been utterly fruitless for their toil, they would be prepared to receive the announcement. The miraculous life which death seemed to have cut short would assume a renewed reality. Though still doubting, they would come to the appointed assembly on the mountain. The Eleven had come down from Jerusalem prepared by the events of Easter-day and its octave. The five hundred from Galilee who would have rejected the words of the Apostles as idle tales were brought back to obedience doubtless by this miracle of the fishes.

It is desirable for us to notice how important a position this miracle occupies as accounting for so large a muster of the disciples, many of whom, as they doubted, would never have gone upon a senseless errand to meet upon the mountain Him whom they believed to be in the grave.

O Jesu, let nothing keep me back from Thee. Well may I distrust myself, but I will not doubt of Thy power. In earthly things Thou showest Thy power that we may draw near and seek Thy heavenly truth.

Be assured, My son, that I will always help forward with all necessary demonstration

those who are really seeking My truth as their opportunities allow.

O my Lord, would that all the multitudes could now be brought to Thee as those five hundred were upon the mountain.

My son, they have sufficient evidence to bring them to Me if their hearts are prepared to worship. I reject none whose doubts are true, for they will come to Me to have them solved. Those men do I reject who cherish doubts rooted in the will because they dislike what My servants teach, and with no true desire of outward evidence. These come not, therefore they see not.

O Lord, lead us ever onward to Thy holy hill, and to Thy dwelling. Yea, we will worship Thee upon Thy holy hill, for Thou, O Lord our God, art holy.

2. THE WORSHIP OF THE KING.

It may seem strange that from the first the Apostles were pointed onward to the solemn meeting in Galilee, and yet there were to be so many occasions of meeting with the risen Saviour in the interval.

The reason is that this interview in Galilee was intended to have an importance quite peculiar to itself. The other appearances of our Lord were unexpected and private in their character. They were preparing the way for this royal reception which He would hold as the inauguration of His kingdom.

It was necessary that there should be a sufficient number present to form a representative body of the

Church that was to be. The previous meetings were necessary to make this possible. On former occasions He appeared when they did not look for Him. Now the Eleven are going forth, with hundreds following, to keep an appointment with their Master. This must dispel all remains of doubt. Men cannot keep appointments with wandering spirits. They go out at Christ's bidding. To meet Him is to be established in the truth. This was in a way applying to our Lord's resurrection that proof by experiment which modern science requires. Here there could be no accident, no delusion. All was premeditated and arranged. With strange thoughts they must have gone forth. The hearts of many must have felt but little hope that Jesus would meet them on the hill.

Nevertheless the Eleven led the way with a firm confidence. Of old 'when Jesus was set, his disciples came unto Him' (Matt. v. 1). Now we know not whether He was there visibly awaiting them. More probably they came to the place first, and then He appeared to them.

They recognised Him as a heavenly being. No longer was He in that relation to them which had been of old, when perhaps some of this very multitude were amongst the thousands who wanted to take Him by force and make Him a king (St. John vi. 15). Now He is manifest as a king, more than a king. He is the King not made by man, but established by God to rule upon the holy hill of Zion (Ps. ii. 6). This is the Light which was to shine in Galilee of the Gentiles (Is. ix. 2).

They worshipped Him. The very purpose for

which He called them here to meet Him was that He might receive this Divine homage. 'O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness; let the whole earth stand in awe of Him. Tell it out among the heathen that the Lord is King' (Ps. xevi. 9, 10).

He proclaims Himself in the plenitude of His Divine authority. 'All power is given unto Me, both in heaven and on earth.' It is in this kingdom that all the utterances of the Psalter find their completeness. It is to Messiah's kingdom as the development of the second Psalm that they all point. He is the true Melchisedec. 'Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of Thy kingdom' (Ps. xlv. 6; Heb. i. 8).

All power is given unto Him in heaven. Angels, principalities, and powers are made subject unto Him. He is the Lord from Heaven. He has not as yet entered into His glory, but the glory is His. There is no longer any foe to conquer. He has but to take His seat at the right hand of the Father. More than twelve legions of angels wait upon Him. It is the throne of the Ancient of Days to which the Son of man is brought. 'Thousand thousands ministered unto Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him' (Dan. vii. 10).

All power in heaven is His, for He is the central principle of heavenly life. All power upon earth is His, for He has conquered the great enemy. Yet He has still to manifest His full sovereignty over evil. He will send forth His Apostles to subdue the world unto Himself in virtue of the power which He claims.

We are not to doubt that the world belongs to

Christ because evil still continues so powerful. Rather we ought to feel how great is our power to overcome the uprisings of evil, since all power upon earth is given unto Christ, and He through us claims the gift. We cannot subdue evil by earthly power: by grace we can.

He ascends to heaven to take possession of the throne. He sends forth His Apostles to exercise that power upon earth, to claim 'obedience to the faith among all nations' (Rom. i. 5). We are too apt to talk of winning, instead of going forth to claim what Christ has won. The kingdom of Christ from this day forth is to exert her power not as one hoping for victory, but with triumph already assured. However Satan may still tyrannise, the kingdoms of the world are even now become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ (Rev. xi. 15).

This small company as they worship Jesus are to feel that the earth is the Lord's and all that therein is (Ps. xxiv. 1). They are partakers of His sovereignty. 'All things are theirs, for they are Christ's and Christ is God's' (1 Cor. iii. 23).

O Jesu, Thou art raised from the dead, nevermore to die. Thine is the everlasting kingdom. All forms of earthly empire shall pass away, but Thou shalt reign for ever and ever.

Even so, My son. I call thee near unto Myself in a kingdom which cannot be moved. All that is of earth shall pass away, but I am the promised Emmanuel who dwell in the midst of My people. Therefore they shall not

be moved, but I will make them strong for ever.

O Lord Jesu, blessed is the man that putteth his trust in Thee.

8. THE EXTENSION OF THE KINGDOM.

Go ye and make disciples of all nations. The kingdom of heaven thus established upon earth must be proclaimed. All nations must be brought into the kingdom of Christ. God has given Him the heathen for his inheritance, and the utmost parts of the earth for His possession (Ps. ii. 8). The Apostles are to go forth in the security of this Divine gift. This is the kingdom of the truth. All who come into it must be admitted as disciples.

‘Make disciples of all the nations, baptising them into the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.’

Already have the Apostles been entrusted with a worldwide witness and the powers of the ministry of reconciliation by the gift of the Holy Ghost. Now that the kingdom is inaugurated the rite of initiation into the kingdom is instituted. ‘He shall sprinkle many nations’ (Is. lii. 15). By baptism they are to be gathered into the Name of the Trinity which is now proclaimed in its fulness because it is henceforth to operate in its power as the foundation of the covenant whereon the kingdom of the Incarnate Son is to be established. ‘In that day shall there be one Lord, and His Name one’ (Zech. xiv. 9). The unity of the life of the Triune God is the law of vitality

wherein the people of God are to be one. 'The Name of the Lord is a strong tower' (Prov. xviii. 10). The kingdom established in that Name shall fulfil our Lord's prayer, 'that they may be one as We are' (St. John xvii. 11) . . . all perfected into one' (St. John xvii. 22, 23).

'Teach them to do all things whatsoever I have commanded you.' That which Christ has instituted in His Church must be observed with strictness. The laws of the kingdom of grace are not of inferior obligation to the laws of the kingdom of nature. They cannot be evolved from the human consciousness. They are not necessary because the human reason approves them. Natural conscience may perceive the moral obligations under which good people have to live. The kingdom of Christ has to be maintained by the ordinances which Christ has entrusted to His Apostles for the discipline of His people according to the new covenant of Divine life.

'Lo, I am with you all the days, even unto the consummation of the age.'

Manifold shall be the vicissitudes of the kingdom of Christ in its outward appearance upon earth, but now shall the blessing of Asher be manifested to God's people in the perfection of Divine security. 'As thy days, so shall thy strength be' (Deut. xxxiii. 25). The Church is not to live in the monotony of undisputed supremacy, but in the sustaining glory of the presence of Jesus as her life. Though He be absent from sight He will be none the less present in truth. He at the right hand of the Father will evermore be Head over all things to His Church, and

His Church shall have no other Head than He, for His people shall be one with Him even as He is one with the Father in the unity of the Holy Ghost.

O Jesu, grant that I may alway be worthy of that holy Name whereby I am called. Let me serve Thee in Thy kingdom evermore with reverence and godly fear.

I have called thee, My son, into the kingdom of My grace. Use it not as an occasion to the flesh, but in the power of the Spirit which I have given thee, rise up above the bondage of the flesh from which I have delivered thee.

O Lord, as Thou art dead and livest with a new life, no more an earthly one, so must Thy people be dead unto the world if they would live with Thee. Indeed we cannot know the glory of Thy Divine life unless we have risen up to live with Thee in the life beyond the grave.

Yea, My son, be not deceived. Others will try to live for Me, living still with the life of the world. Not so do thou. I have called thee wholly out of the world. Thou must live in Me with My own Divine life. Those perishing things of the earth no longer avail thee. I have called thee to the mountain of the Lord's house. Look not to the valley of the shadow of death.

O Lord Jesu, I am no more of the world, even as Thou art not of the world. I am Thine, O save me, for I have sought Thy commandments.

MEDITATION LII.

The Life of the Faithful.

And He said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned. And these signs shall follow them that believe: in my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall in no wise hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.—St. Matt. xvi. 15-18.

1. THE BAPTISMAL COVENANT.

AFTER this solemn appointment in Galilee it would seem natural that the Apostles should return to Jerusalem without delay. They were to preach repentance and remission of sins in the Name of Christ unto all nations, beginning at Jerusalem (St. Luke xxiv. 47). Although it was in Galilee that the kingdom of light should be inaugurated, as Isaiah had said, 'In Galilee of the nations, upon them that dwell in the land of the shadow of death hath the light shined' (Is. ix. 2), yet it was from Mount Zion that this new law should go forth, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem (Is. ii. 3).

Here in Jerusalem we may well believe that our Lord Jesus frequently during the last fortnight of Eastertide would appear to His Apostles, giving them detailed instructions as to that dispensation which was now being formed, 'speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God' (Acts i. 3). St. Paul

speaks of His being seen after the Galilean solemnity, first of James, and then of all of the Apostles' (1 Cor. xv. 7), and St. Luke relates in the Acts (i. 4) how 'being assembled together with them, He commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith He, ye have heard of me,' so that Jesus must have met the Apostles once at least, or more probably, as it is implied, several times, after they had come back to the holy city.

Of the appearance to James we can form no idea. Who this James was, and whether he was already a believer in Christ, we do not know.

St. Mark gives us some heads of what our Lord said to the Apostles belonging to this period. These words could not have been spoken until after the institution of the baptismal covenant in Galilee, for they refer not to the presence of the Holy Ghost as a power vaguely entrusted to the Church for the remission of sins, but to the express form of initiation which Jesus had ordained for His disciples in Galilee. 'He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned.'

We learn from these words the insufficiency of faith alone, without the due form of initiation. Christ had ordained that form as a means of admission to an outward covenanted society which was thenceforth to be developed, and salvation was to be found only in that society. Union with that society was not effected by mere conviction of intellect or sincerity of heart, but by participation of the grace residing therein. Mankind were to be baptised into

the Name of the Holy Trinity, and would become partakers of the Divine life as members of the Body of which He Himself, the Son of God, was the ever-living Head.

The salvation thus promised was salvation from the bondage of sin, as our Lord had said, 'If the Son shall make you free, then are ye free indeed' (St. John viii. 36). So St. Peter speaks, 'Baptism saveth us' (1 St. Peter iii. 21). As the flood bore up the ark, so that they who were therein would live thenceforth with a new life upon the earth, so the waters of baptism would bear up the Church of God above the mountains of earth, and they who are within it live with the supernatural life of God.

Moreover we learn from these words the necessity of faith in order to continuance in that state of salvation. The baptismal gift needs to be cherished with the same earnestness wherewith it must be sought. The natural faith wherewith we come to baptism must be transformed into the supernatural faith which the Holy Ghost inspires in the regenerate. If we have been brought as unconscious infants into the fold of Christ, we must rise up to the consciousness of our supernatural inheritance as the capacities of natural activity become developed in the soul. 'He that believeth not shall be damned.' That this refers to post-baptismal faith is evident, because the condemnation is future. Of those who are outside of the saving covenant Jesus said, 'He that believeth not has been judged already, because he hath not believed upon the Name (or more literally "into the Name") of the only-begotten Son of God.' This is the

judgment passed upon those who reject the covenant of faith, as our Lord Himself explains the words, 'This is the judgment, that light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness more than the light, because their deeds were evil' (St. John iii. 18, 19). The judgment remains unaltered upon those who reject Christ, for 'they do not come to Him that they may have life' and may be saved (St. John v. 40). They who have been admitted by baptism into the covenant of faith and yet afterwards fall away, shall be condemned hereafter. Outwardly they are here among God's people, but their doom awaits them because they believe not. 'They are fallen from grace' (Gal. v. 4).

O Jesu, praise be to Thee that Thou hast called me into Thy covenant of life. Evermore preserve me in this state of salvation.

My son, thou must look to Me continually that I may sustain thee in the life which I have given thee. Go one of old I said, Sin no more, lest a worse thing happen unto thee, but thou art brought into the life of grace, and it is not enough that thou sin not, thou must by faith abide in fellowship with Me, lest thou forfeit the gift of supernatural life which I have given unto thee. Thou art brought into the kingdom of grace, and thou must be judged by the law of grace.

O Lord, truly great is the responsibility of Thy people, even to show forth the virtue of Thine own adorable life whereby they are quickened. Yet, Lord, Thy power and Thy love are as great as our re-

sponsibility. In my own strength it were impossible that I should continue. Lord, I believe, help Thou mine unbelief.

2. THE SIGNS OF FAITH.

These signs shall follow them that believe. Our Lord thus illustrates the supernatural character of the faith which we must have if we would escape the condemnation of the last day. He sets forth the signs which will testify to its supernatural efficacy.

These signs as we read them must make us feel how miserably inadequate our faith is, since we have so little experience of them.

We are not indeed to suppose that these signs would always be manifesting themselves even if we were living in the fulness of apostolic faith. It is not said that they shall always go along with faith. Even in the Apostles' days they were not always present. Had they been so the course of nature would have been destroyed, and an immortality would have been established on this side the grave in place of that better eternal life which faith was to win. Sickness and death would have lost their power.

But it is also plain that such signs ought to be in some degree the constant heritage of the Christian Church. Faith must be sadly defective which never exhibits them. Here, then, we have great cause to humble ourselves. God's promise is sure, the fault is ours. Do we not see the signs? Alas! whether we look into our own hearts or upon those around us, it is equally true that we do not find any faith

which can be thought worthy to produce such consequences.

Are we then to be content to let it be so? God forbid. We must not relapse into a dull acquiescence with this spiritual torpor. Rather let us rouse ourselves, stirring up the gift of God which is in us, that we may gain a faith more worthy of Him that calleth us.

These signs are not promised in order to awaken faith in those outside, but to testify to the reality of faith in those who have it. The Jews who sought a sign were blamed, both by our Lord in His ministry and by St. Paul upon his mission (1 Cor. i. 22). No sign was to be given them but the sign of our Lord's resurrection, the sign of the prophet Jonas. The coming of Christ's kingdom needed not the attestation of outward portents in order to evince its supernatural character. The miracles of Jesus were not intended merely as credentials to the world, but much rather as encouragements to His people. So is it therefore now that He is gone. We must not desire miracles as a sign of Divine truth, as if for us the truth needed to be substantiated in this way, but we are equally bound to deplore the absence of these signs which ought to follow faith, for their absence implies the absence of that supernatural faith from which they ought to spring, that God may be glorified thereby.

We must also observe that these signs are to follow upon personal faith. They imply a supernatural elevation of character. The miracles of the Christian Church are the results of an inherited

supernatural life, the manifestation of the Holy Spirit operating in the regenerate. They are not promised as strange phenomena treasured up in charmed localities, or wonder-working instruments. They are the signs of personal fellowship in supernatural life, binding together Christ and His members. Christ does not here promise supernatural interventions from without, but He does promise supernatural energies to work within His people. How must we mourn that such signs are wanting! They would not be wanting if we were true to Jesus our Head. Alas! we seek the things of the world rather than the things of Christ, and we are not to wonder that we find the power of the world oppressing us as its slaves, rather than the power of Christ testifying to us as Christ's members that God is in us of a truth (1 Cor. xiv. 25).

O Jesu, grant me the experience of Thy supernatural love. Quicken me that I may walk worthy of Thy covenant and show forth Thy glory.

3. THE OBJECT OF FAITH.

What is meant by believing? What is the object upon which men were to believe? They were to believe, not as many persons would put it now-a-days, in the death of Christ. They were 'to believe in His Name.'

That phrase used by our Lord in His earlier teaching acquires its meaning now. They were to believe in His supernatural life. They were to believe in the

resurrection which they were called to share. His risen life was to be the origin of new life to His people. The signs here promised would show the reality of that life which they had received. It was not as the children of a dead race that they were to do these wonders, but as the children of the resurrection (St. Luke xx. 36), the sons of the living God (Hos. i. 10). Our Lord does not speak of these miracles as if the laws of nature were to be suspended, but He argues that the supernatural character of the life of His disciples and the supernatural acts which they shall do must involve one another. The higher nature of the risen life is a nature having powers of its own, which must therefore produce effects of its own.

During the age of martyrdom the faithful lived in the consciousness of a life participating in the supernatural powers of their risen and ascended Lord. Since the Church has learnt to rely upon earthly powers she has lost this consciousness. The ordinary consent of Christians relegates miracles to an age long since gone by, and does so with historical truth indeed, but alas! with shameful ignorance of her own blameworthiness. The Church cannot now say, 'Silver and gold have I none,' but, as St. Bernard replied to the Pontiff, 'Neither can she say, Rise up and walk.'

Our Lord said, 'When the Son of man cometh, shall He find faith upon earth?' How is it now? Of dead faith in a dead Saviour there is much, and it is used as the basis of indulgence to sin under various forms of Christianity widely opposed to one another.

but of living faith in a living Saviour producing a real and efficacious fellowship with Jesus at the right hand of God, as the source of supernatural life to His members upon earth, alas ! of this how little is there ! We ought not to desire such faith in order that we may see the signs, but we ought to desire to see the signs in order to be sure that we have such faith in us.

These signs are in no way specially characteristic of the Apostolate as such. They belong to all the members of the Body of Christ, and do not exempt any from the sacramental duties of their several positions in the Body of Christ. 'According to their faith be it done.'

O Lord Jesu, grant us so to believe in Thee that we may know ourselves to be raised out of the world by Thy holy fellowship. We desire not to be raised above the control of natural law, if we may but live true to the powers of Thy grace.

My son, seek thou the gifts of Heaven, and all earthly things shall be added unto thee. Seek not the things of earth, lest thou lose thine heavenly inheritance.

O Jesu, I desire to live true to Thee in all the fellowship of Thy risen life.

My son, remember that if thou wouldst share in the gifts of power which I bestowed upon My saints of old, thou must be prepared to have thy faith tested by the same sufferings whereby their faithfulness to Me was also proved.

O Lord Jesu, I give myself up to Thee that Thou

mayest deal with me according to the discipline of Thy love. Work in me that which is pleasing unto Thee, that the victory of Thy Cross and the power of Thy resurrection may shine out in all my life, and I may be so filled with Thy grace amidst earthly things that I may live with Thee when earth is passed away, partaker of Thy triumph in the glory of the Father.

MEDITATION LIII.

The Ascension.

So then the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken unto them, was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God. And they went forth and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word by the signs that followed. Amen.—St. Mark xvi. 19, 20.

And he led them out until they were over against Bethany; and he lifted up his hands and blessed them. And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he parted from them, and was carried up into heaven. And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy; and were continually in the temple, blessing God.—St. Luke xxiv. 50-53.

They therefore, when they were come together, asked him, saying, Lord, dost thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know times or seasons, which the Father hath set within his own authority. But ye shall receive power, when the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem: and in all Judaea and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. And when he had said these things, as they were looking, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they were looking steadfastly into heaven as he went, behold two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye looking into heaven? This Jesus which was received up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye beheld him going into heaven. Then returned they unto Jerusalem.—Acts i. 6-12.

1. THE UNKNOWN FUTURE.

WHEN the day of our Lord's Ascension arrived and He led the Apostles out as far as to Bethany, it is impossible not to suppose that they had some idea of a great event about to happen, however obscure might be their imagination respecting its character.

It seems that they 'came together' by appointment.. Our Lord's appearances to them were unexpected, and unless He had announced His presence upon this occasion they would not have been ready to receive Him. When He said that He would be with them, and then led them out solemnly to Bethany, they would naturally look for some great development of the kingdom recently inaugurated in Galilee. So they asked Him as they went out if He would at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel.

'It is not for you to know the times nor the seasons through which My kingdom shall progress towards its completeness.' Such was His answer. There would be various times or periods, marked off by many a season or crisis, ere the end, but they could know nothing beforehand. Their work had been given them, to preach the gospel in Jerusalem, and Judea, and Samaria, and unto the ends of the earth. They had received the Spirit when Christ breathed upon them. They would receive fresh gifts of power when He should come upon them by some communication from the glory of the Father.

The future remained unknown. Enough it was for them to do their work. Surely at that moment they could not even conceive how vast that work would be. To God, however, all lay bare. Their duty was to work. The ordering of times must rest with God.

O Jesu, I know not what Thou hast in store. Let me be content to do Thy will with patience, knowing that Thou wilt order everything in the time that is best.

My son, fear not. My power is sufficient for the work that I give thee. No power of the enemy can rise up against thee save by permission of the Father.

O Lord, surely I could do my work the better if I knew whereunto it was leading.

No, My son. Thou must not act in thine own wisdom, but according to my revelation in truth. Things shall seem to thee to be untimely, but look thou to Him who orders all things for thee, and the trial of thy faith shall be fruitful unto holiness.

O my Jesu, surely there is no time for delay. How shalt Thou be proclaimed in the world ere Thou come again? Of old Thou didst say that Thy disciples would not have accomplished their work until the Son of man be come. O how much greater is this work which yet remains to do. O help us to go forward with it, that at Thy coming all may be ready.

2. THE RECEIVING UP IN GLORY.

Jesus blessed them; and was parted from them. See His hands stretched out to bless. He rises from the ground. Their eyes are fixed on Him and follow Him. Never till now had they felt themselves to be so entirely one with Him. Formerly He had vanished out of their sight. Now He holds their gaze fixed on Himself although no form is there for them to see. A cloud has come round about that form which rose from earth. He who was lifted up by soldiers' hands when crucified is lifted again, but

by another power. All men must come after Him. They must be drawn the first of all. This drawing after Him is the very drawing after Him of the whole world to which they shall go forth and minister.

But why are they thus drawn? How does He draw? At former times when He vanished He passed out of sight, but did not subject Himself to any removal. He was still in the same region of spiritual life into which He had in some measure brought them by His indwelling Presence. Seen or unseen, He remained unchanged. Now it is so no longer. As the cloud receives Him, He goes upward into a higher region of glorified life, as the High Priest into the Holy of Holies. Yet He does not leave them altogether. He draws them on along with Himself. They experience within themselves the effort, if such a word may be allowed, by which His human nature rises to new glory. Truly is it fulfilled in them, 'He shall draw them with the cords of a man, and with bands of love.' By a twofold power does His Person work upon theirs, by the human Body, a Body which they received in the first Eucharist, and by the Spirit of Love breathed upon them after His Resurrection. This twofold union with them was not transient. It was an abiding union, and that union must make itself felt by their participation in the onward movement of His Body.

For we must remember that He does not ascend as from place to place, but from state to state. During the forty days His glorified humanity has continued in one condition of nearness to our earthly

life. The Throne of God to which He ascends is not higher than our earthly nature as the sun at noon is higher than the earth over which he shines. The Divine glory surpasses ours in nature, as the soul is higher than the body, as the spirit is higher than the soul, as life is superior to death.

So the Body of Jesus is glorified by being taken up into modes of existence higher than belong to man upon the earth, or than belonged even to His risen humanity in the glory of the forty days. The stages of glory are many (St. John xiv. 2).

Between man and God the various ranks of holy angels exist, each order having its own laws of action and movement, as we on earth exist under the conditions of time and space proper to ourselves. Man was made for a little while lower than these hosts, but now in the person of Jesus manhood is to be carried through those gradations of being to a dignity higher than angels know (Ps. viii. 6).

We may therefore well conceive that the Body of Jesus was not translated in an instant of time from the company at Bethany to the Right Hand of power. He would apparently in the very nature of things have to pass through those intermediate forms of glorious life which constitute 'the heavens' (Eph. iv. 10). St. Paul says He was made higher than the heavens (Heb. vii. 26), plainly therefore passing in some manner through them.

As He ascends the angel choirs make appeal one to another, handing Him on. 'Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of Glory shall come in. Who is the King.

of Glory? The Lord of hosts, He is the King of Glory' (Ps. xxiv. 9, 10).

Not as earthly thoroughfares do the doors of heaven open with angel throngs making way for Him to enter. They each receive Him into their midst as the human nature which He has assumed rises in ever-growing dignity of action to the glorious life which characterises those sublime existences in the gradations of their lustre. He rises from power to power.

It seems also that He did not ascend alone. It is as 'the Lord of hosts' that He ascends. The hosts of heaven through whom He passes are His servants. Another host, the host of His redeemed, comes after Him. These live united to Himself. 'The spirits of just men made perfect,' who were delivered by Him when He broke the gates of brass, now enter along with Him. 'The breaker is come up before them; they have broken up and have passed through the gate, and are gone out by it; and their king shall pass before them, and the Lord on the head of them' (Mic. ii. 18).

St. Paul speaks of 'the spirits of just men made perfect' as being a distinct class in the heavenly Jerusalem from 'the general assembly and church of the firstborn whose names are written in heaven' (Heb. xii. 28). They seem to be the perfected saints of the earlier age, distinguished by bodily resurrection from those who are heirs of the kingdom in the new covenant of the firstborn.

These blessed ones then constituted the mystical Body of the ascending Christ. Their souls He

united to Himself when He descended into hell. Their bodies rose with His own Body as being His members, and appeared to many. They now pass on with Him to heaven to sit with Him upon the Father's throne as those of Christian times shall sit eventually (Rev. iii. 21).

He ascends, glorifying along with Himself those He has delivered, the prisoners of hope (Zech. ix. 12).

So does our Lord ascend from this lower world subject to the Angels, through the glory of Archangels, Thrones, Dominions, Principalities, Powers, Virtues, Cherubim and Seraphim. He takes to Himself the glory of every name that is named, and passes on beyond it (Eph. i. 21). Nine days were to elapse ere the Holy Ghost be given with power from on high. It may well be that these nine days refer to the nine orders of the heavenly hierarchy which Holy Scripture reveals to us. The glorious consummation belongs to a later Meditation. Enough for us now to think how the human nature of Christ ascended, unchanged in substance, through various transformations of power, from glory to glory, even as the Lord the Spirit glorified Him (2 Cor. iii. 18). He, the firstfruits from the dead, our great Fore-runner, has thus become a High Priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedec (Heb. vi. 20). He is ascended up far above all heavens, that He may fill all things (Eph. iv. 11). No form of heavenly existence fails to participate in the brightness of His exaltation. He is the glory and the strength of all.

The very hierarchies of heaven would be insecure unless sustained by His mediation. No creature has

stability in itself. The very sanctities of heaven are established in their glory by the fellowship of the Incarnate Word, the Son of man whom God hath crowned with glory and worship, and hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be Head over all things to His Church, which is His Body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all (Heb. ii. 9 ; Eph. i. 22, 28).

This glorification of Christ supplies the law and the power whereby and wherein we ourselves are to be glorified. That which has happened to His Body shall by reason of our union with His Body happen to us also, if we abide in Him. It is the work of the Spirit. 'If the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you' (Rom. viii. 11).

It seems then that the humanity of Christ, both body and soul, were at the Ascension glorified by the life-giving Spirit by whose indwelling Jesus is the Christ. He is consummated in His office as the Christ by His Ascension. St. Peter says, 'God hath made this same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ' (Acts ii. 36). He was so from the first, but the glory proper to these titles now first shone out in active energy. He is the Lord, for He is the Eternal Son of the Father ; the Christ, for His humanity is glorified by the anointing Spirit to be the form of Divine manifestation. So that the Godhead, no longer hidden, shines in the Son of Man. The Lamp of Heaven is the Lamb of God (Rev. xxi. 22).

Great is the mystery of Godliness. God was manifest in the flesh, assuming our mortality ; justified in the Spirit, for the righteousness of God shines forth in heaven before all creation by the Spirit of holiness ; seen of angels, who in all former ages had veiled their faces, for they could not look upon God (Is. vi. 2) ; proclaimed among the Gentiles, according to the charge which ere He ascended He gave to His Apostles ; believed on in the world, so as to become the Head of the newly constituted race in the covenant of faith ; received up in glory as the body of His humiliation is transfigured to become the body of His glory, according to the mighty working whereby He shall eventually subject all things to Himself (Phil. iii. 21).

O Jesu, as Thou hast called me by sacramental union with Thyself to partake of that fulness of blessing wherewith Thou art glorified in the heavenly places by the Spirit of holiness at the right hand of the Father, grant that I may alway look up to Thee, and in the contemplation of Thy glory find true life.

Yea, My son, as thou art risen with Me, thou must set thine affections on the things above. Thou art Mine in the life of the Spirit. Ever must that Spirit lead thee, that in Me thou mayest be glorified eternally.

O Lord Jesu, I desire to die unto the world that I may live to Thee. Therefore hast Thou called me into the life of Religion, that I might the more truly correspond with the baptismal law, and being buried

from all outward things, might experience the joy of being risen from the dead along with Thee.

O My son, thou canst not walk in the power of My resurrection unless thou art constantly looking to Me as thy Head. So will I communicate to thee gifts ever new from the glory of the Father.

Even so, most loving Lord. Let Thy glory be my strength amidst all suffering here below. Thy throne is the centre whence all Thy members gain all spiritual power to make Thy glory shine in our sinful world.

Look up to Me, My son. The vision of My glory shall enlighten thee. The pathway by which I have ascended never shall be closed till all My saints are gathered in. The angels through whose ranks I passed shall execute their ministrations unceasingly. The grace of My humanity shall bear My people upward in a changeless covenant of everlasting love.

O Lord Jesu, purify the eye of my soul that with unveiled face I may behold Thy glory even as the Holy Ghost empowers me for the comprehension of Thy mystery in the fellowship of all Thy saints.

3. THE RETURN OF THE APOSTLES.

They came back to Jerusalem. Their Lord was gone, but they were full of joy. They knew now how expedient it was for them that He should go away (St. John xvi. 7). He was gone from natural modes of human presence, but He was nearer

to them than ever He could be before. By His Presence within themselves they felt themselves to share the glory and the joy of His ascent. He was parted from them in outward intercourse, but His glory held them in growing closeness of power, held them in the unity of indissoluble life.

Warned by two angels not to stand gazing on the outward sky, not to forget the heaven within, they returned to Jerusalem from Olivet. As they were continually in the temple, blessing God, they felt a thrill of heavenly worship hitherto unknown. He was their High Priest going up beyond the veil. He was their life. Their temple now was not the stately building whose doom had been declared. Their true, their living temple, was His glorious Body, raised from the dead. This is the sanctuary of which the prophet spake (Is. viii. 14). Its ministrations were no empty form. The covenant of the Spirit should henceforth be known as a covenant of life. The Blood of Jesus ministered in ordinances of grace should purge all those who sought its cleansing power. They felt within themselves the unction of that Spirit of gladness which hereafter they were to minister to others. The unction poured out upon the Head flowed forth on them as once the symbolic stream suffused the beard and clothing of Aaron with its holy fragrance (Ps. cxxxiii. 2). Christ is entered into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us, and His members shall henceforth 'have boldness to enter into the holiest in the Blood of Jesus through the veil, that is to say His Flesh' (Heb. x. 19, 20). As Haggai prophesied, so has it come to pass. The

temple of the returned captives has obtained a greater glory than the former house. 'In this place will I give peace, saith the Lord of hosts' (Hag. ii. 9).

O Jesu, establish Thou me evermore in Thy covenant of peace.

My son, thou must look to Me seated on the Right Hand of the Father. So shalt thou never be moved from thy steadfastness.

Yea, Lord Jesu, now dost Thou reign as the Christ victorious over all. Let me not rebel against Thee. O let me contemplate Thy triumph, look to Thy protection, rest on Thy support, feel Thee ever near, and rise above the earth in the fellowship of Thy Life.

NOTE.

Holy Scripture reveals to us nine orders in Heaven—

1. Seraphim,¹ Spirits of Love,
2. Cherubim,² Spirits of Knowledge,
3. Thrones,^{3 4}
4. Dominations,^{5 5}
5. Principalities,^{5 5 6}
6. Powers,^{5 5}
7. Virtues,⁶
8. Archangels,⁶
9. Angels.⁷

¹ Is. vi. 2, 6.

² Ezek. i. 1.

³ Col. i. 16.

⁴ Rev. iv. 2, 4.

⁵ Eph. i. 21.

⁶ Thess. iv. 16; Jude 9.

⁷ Throughout Scripture.

Vide Bishop Andrewes' Devotions for the Second Day of the Week.

MEDITATION LIV.

Christ Receiving Gifts for Men.

And when the day of Pentecost was now come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came from heaven a sound as of the rushing of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them tongues parting asunder, like as of fire; and it sat upon each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.—Acts ii. 1-4.

There is one body, and one Spirit, even as also ye were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in all. But unto each one of us was the grace given according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Wherefore he saith,

When he ascended on high, he led captivity captive,

And gave gifts unto men.

(Now this, He ascended, what is it but that he also descended into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.) And he gave some to be apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ: till we all attain unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a fullgrown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.—Eph. iv. 4-13.

1. THE WAVE-LOAVES OF PENTECOST.

THE gift of Pentecost is the consummation of the resurrection-life throughout the Body of Christ, both in the ascended Head seated at the Right Hand of God, and in his members living along with Him by this fellowship of His glory.

So of old the giving of the law on Mount Sinai completed the covenant into which Israel was brought by the paschal deliverance from Egypt. By this

covenant the people were brought near to God, as God had promised to Moses, 'This shall be a token to them that I have sent thee; when thou hast brought the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain' (Ex. iii. 12). Accordingly three days before Pentecost God spake to Moses, saying, 'If ye will obey My voice indeed, and keep My covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me above all people: for all the earth is mine, and ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation' (Ex. xix. 5).

The people thus consecrated to God under the law of the Ten Commandments were a spiritual harvest of which the Exodus was the commencement. St. Paul speaks of Christians in like manner, as being 'redeemed from all iniquity' by Christ's resurrection, that they might be 'purified unto Himself as a peculiar people zealous of good works' by the law of the Spirit and the gift of Pentecost (Tit. ii. 14).

Beautifully did this image harmonise with the physical aspect of the two festivals. Indeed the earlier Jews, thinking of nature, lost sight of themselves as being God's harvest. It was not wonderful, for the law was weak through the flesh. The harvest could not be gathered in under the old dispensation. The Sinaitic law was a law of bondage and fear. Until the Spirit was given at the Christian Pentecost, the festival could not fulfil its design either of human joy or Divine satisfaction. 'The righteousness of the law had to be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit' (Rom. viii. 4) before

Pentecost could be that spiritual harvest of saints which should be worthy of heaven's jubilee.

The idea, however, was present as we have seen. It was God's primary object in that solemnity.

This festival hallowed nature's abundance. Annually during the ages of ignorance the typical joy of harvest was kept up with holy rites before God, although its spiritual promises were forgotten.

At Passover the harvest began. The sheaf of the firstfruits of the harvest was to be waved before the Lord (Lev. xxiii. 10) on the sixteenth day of the first month. From this day were to be counted the seven sabbaths which should usher in the Feast of Weeks, or Pentecost, upon the fiftieth day following. Then were the people to bring out of their habitations, i.e., out of the land in which they dwelt, 'two wave-loaves, of two tenth deals: they shall be of fine flour: they shall be baked with leaven: they are the firstfruits unto the Lord. The priest shall wave them before the Lord.' Seven lambs of the first year, one bullock, and two rams were to be offered as a burnt offering. One kid of the goats was to be sacrificed as a sin offering. Two lambs of the first year were to be waved before the Lord along with the two wave-loaves, as a sacrifice of peace offerings (Lev. xxiii. 15-20).

With the barley-sheaf there was to be 'a he lamb without blemish of the first year, for a burnt offering unto the Lord' (xxiii. 12). There was no sin offering with this Easter sheaf: at Pentecost there was.

The wave-sheaf of barley was the type of our Lord rising from the dead on the sixteenth day.



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The rough barley symbolises His assumption of our nature in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin. He was, however, without sin. With this oblation there was no sin offering. 'He needed not to offer up sacrifice first for His own sins' (Heb. vii. 27). Nay, 'He was declared to be the Son of God according to the Spirit of holiness by the resurrection.' Death could not hold Him, for He was sinless.

What, then, is the signification of the two wave-loaves of Pentecost? They are the people of Christ. They are of fine flour, for they rise again by virtue of their incorporation into the new Humanity of Christ, the second Adam. Nevertheless they cannot be presented to God without a sin offering.

These two loaves cannot be presented upon the altar, for they are leavened. They are waved before God and belong to the priest. So the people of Christ cannot be offered upon the heavenly altar, having the leaven of nature within them. Christ presents them to God as His offering, being what God has given to Him. They belong to Himself.

The two rams and the two lambs exhibit Christ as the propitiation and the peace offering whereby they are made acceptable. The two loaves exhibit the resurrection-life of Christ as existing in His people personally distinct from Himself. We are Christ's portion.

In the seven lambs of the burnt offering we see the sacrificial virtue of the sevenfold Spirit, and in the kid of the goats the propitiation of Christ upon the Cross, without which none could be accepted.

There are two wave-loaves, two lambs waved

along with them, two rams of the burnt offering. These offerings are double, because Christ's covenant with His people is twofold. The ancient people and the new are equally His peculiar treasure, and come before God as partakers of His resurrection. The ancient people could not be perfected save in conjunction with the new (Heb. xi. 40). Leah and Rachel are joined in this benediction, As Jesus entered into Jerusalem with the ass and the colt, so with Jew and Gentile He comes before God as their joint Head. 'He hath made both one, for He is our peace.' Therefore there is but one kid. We can have both of us but one sin offering. The burnt offering also speaks of unity. There is one bullock, for in the one Body of our glorious Forerunner and Head, 'we both have access through Him by one Spirit unto the Father' (Eph. ii. 14-18).

Thus does the Pentecostal harvest offering set forth the presentation of Christ's people as perfecting His resurrection glory. 'Thou hast multiplied the nation and increased to Him the joy. They joy before Thee according to the joy of harvest' (Is. ix. 3). 'He who went upon His way weeping comes again with joy' at Easter, and 'brings His Pentecostal sheaves along with Him' as He draws men to God (Ps. cxxvi. 6).

Thus did the Jewish ceremonial in its annual course set forth the Divine fact of Pentecostal power, whereby Christ being lifted up would indeed draw all men unto Him, not only as worshippers around the foot of the Cross, but as partakers of His glorified life.

O Lord Jesu, grant that I may always remember that Thou hast purchased me for Thine ownself. Thou dost present me unto the Father. I am Thine. Yea, Thou hast renewed me in Thine ownself that I may walk according to the law of the Spirit of life in Thine ownself. Evermore will I praise Thee with joyful lips.

© *My son, with joy do I present thee unto the Father, and in the works of righteousness which thou dost perform according to the assistance of My transforming Spirit, I find the satisfaction of My heart. I have hungered for thee that thou mightest glorify Me.*

Alas, O Lord, how little do I fulfil Thy requirements. Thou hast called us to be a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people. O may the law of the Spirit henceforth make manifest within me the glory of Thy renewing power.

2. THE GLORIFICATION OF CHRIST.

Christ is glorified, as we have already seen, by a manifestation of powers inherent within Himself. He does not receive glory by mere translation from a lower sphere to environments of greater splendour. Wherever He is, He is Himself the source of glory to all that are around Him. He is 'received up in glory' (1 Tim. iii. 16) by the exhibition of supernatural powers within His Humanity, showing Him to be superior to all the gradations of created life through which He passes. The glory is not to be

understood as implying a lustre dazzling to the eye alone. It is something much more than that. His glory is the manifestation of an inherent energy of life, dazzling indeed, because incomprehensible, to the faculties of contemplation wherewith, in each sphere of being, successive orders of sanctity rejoice to own Him as the Lord their God.

As one glory after another is manifested in Him, He is found identifying Himself with the perfections which belong to each of the heavenly hierarchies. As they unfold to entertain Him in the midst of their several ranks, 'He fills them.' They become glorious by having Him as their sustaining power. They are stablished in eternal truth by His Ascension. 'Of His fulness we receive' (John i. 16) by grace in the covenant of regeneration, and 'He fills all things' (Eph. iv. 10), giving to all creation new life in Himself, 'whether they be things in earth or things in heaven' (Col. i. 20), so that there is 'a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness' (Rev. xxi. 1; 2 Pet. iii. 18). This righteousness is the very righteousness of God (2 Cor. v. 21). God is no longer a hidden being beneath whose power all creation abides, adoring Him in the darkness of mystery. The mystery of piety is the manifestation of God in the flesh by the outshining of the glory of the Triune Life through the human nature which the Son of God has assumed. 'The glory of God lightens the newly constituted universe, and the Lamb is the Lamp thereof' (Rev. xxi. 23). As 'the lamp of the body is the eye' (Matt. vi. 22), so the mediatorial Humanity of Christ is the illuminative organ of creation, and the



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Divine glory of Christ is the overflowing light of righteousness whereby all creation lives.

Christ does not therefore ascend merely *into* the highest heaven, but 'far above all heavens' (Eph. vi. 10), being made 'higher than the heavens' (Heb. vii. 26). 'He was received up into heaven and set on the Right Hand of God' (Mark xvi. 19), a central point, as it were, of exaltation, unoccupied before, the Throne of the sealed Book 'which no one (man or angel) in heaven or upon earth or under the earth could open nor look thereon' (Rev. v. 4). Christ is not there merely as possessing delegated authority to reign, but inherent glorifying power to act. The authority was given Him in His resurrection (Matt. xxviii. 18), but He had to take His power and reign by His Ascension. Not until He had ascended to the throne of God could the manifestation be, for not till then was the inherent power called into exercise.

During the forty days Jesus was mysteriously present, but His human nature, although existing in a spiritual manner, was not yet operative according to the fulness of that spiritual and Divine authority which He had received. It must be truly transcendentalised. The power of the Divine Sonship must transfigure the created organism of His Humanity with Divine energy, 'The glory of the Lord must fill the house of the Lord,' the temple of Christ's Body (1 Kings viii. 10). It is not as of old, 'when the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud.' The presence of the Divine cloud arrested the ministrations of the typical temple. They were

unworthy. Not so is it now. The Divine light filling Christ's Body is the very principle of power whereby all the ministrations of the true sanctuary become efficacious. The Apostles are endowed with power from on high (Luke xxiv. 49) because Jesus is thus glorified (John vii. 89).

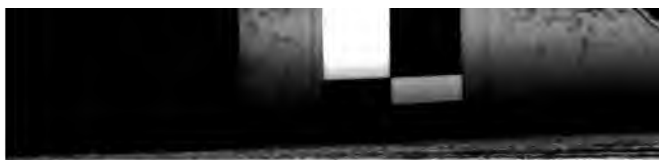
O Jesu, Thou hast set Thy glory above the heavens, yet hast Thou not forsaken me, even though I be unworthy to have a place under Thy feet. O grant me to abide in Thy power.

My son, I have exalted My human nature in this fellowship with the Divine, in order that I may exalt thee and bring thee to share with Me in My kingdom.

O my Jesu, can it be that Thy manhood, filled as it is with Thy Divine glory, is yet truly one with me in my estate of misery.

Yea, My son, the glory wherewith it is now exalted is the glory which I had with the Father before the world was, and it was Mine even during the time of My humiliation. I was content to bear thine emptiness in order that I might fill thee with My fulness. Doubt not My Presence with thee, but seek by My grace to attain that glory into which I am entered as the First-begotten from the dead.

O Jesu, Jesu, I look up to Thee. Surely as Thy majesty is, so is Thy mercy. Thou wilt not reject those whom Thou hast purchased with Thine own Blood. Make me in the power of Thy renewal to show forth the glory of Thine eternal love.



3. THE GIFT OF THE SPIRIT.

There does not seem to be any reason either in the words of the narrative or in the nature of things for supposing that our Lord's complete ascension was the work of an instant. Rather the reverse. As He tarried forty days upon the earth, He might well tarry in other states of being. The other idea, although perhaps more common in the present day, arises from men not having any real faith in the existence of various heavens of intermediate glory between man on earth and the Right Hand of God to which Jesus ascended.

In order to conceive the glorification of Christ's Body we must consider what the human body really is.

The human body consists of a certain force which is found animating matter and filling it with certain powers such as cannot be found elsewhere. The Body of Christ had within it, moreover, the presence of the Holy Ghost, a Divine power anointing, regulating, expanding, glorifying, this organism.

By the resurrection the Body of Christ was freed from the conditions of our fallen nature, the likeness of sin under which the Son of God, though sinless, consented to be born, to suffer, and to die. His Body rose as a spiritual Body, all its forces being perfectly free to act according to the impulse of the anointing Spirit's eternal love, no longer cumbered by the conditions of dead matter which limited its action before death.

The grossness, heaviness, weariness, immobility

of our material frame arises from the dead matter with which we are associated. Our true body is the force which struggles to act through this dense medium. The form of flesh is the condition under which this force becomes an agent in the material world, a form which is spiritualised but not destroyed by the resurrection. The force of our nature is developed, and so our body for the future is perfected, or, as we commonly say, *habits* are formed by the acts we do while striving to bring this flesh into subjection. Those habits formed on earth constitute our eternal selves. Our Lord Jesus acted in perfect truth according to the will of God. Consequently His Body rose again in perfect harmony with the Eternal indwelling Spirit. Nothing was wanting to Him.

This force became gradually manifest as He ascended. The indwelling Spirit showed forth therein all the various capacities which constitute the several glories of the heavenly host. All were found in Him.

This Body was capable of higher exaltation. Being entirely identified with the will of God, it was not capable of full development until it became the complete organ of the power of God.

All this exaltation, however, was the work of the indwelling Spirit, a glory not from without but from within, not involving a change of the Body, but manifesting the identity of the Body from first to last. 'In Him dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily' from the very beginning (Col. ii. 9).

It would have been no Ascension if Christ had

received a new Body. The habits formed by natural struggle in this lower world, keeping the flesh by a human will in entire subjection to the Spirit, constitute the glorious power of the Body now that it is set free. He attains the joy that was set before Him by unfettered correspondence with the Spirit whose power He exerts.

At the Right Hand of God He receives the Holy Ghost in all the fulness of anointing as Lord and Christ. The hand is the symbol of action, and Jesus is said to be on the Right Hand of God because God acts toward all creation *through* His glorified manhood. As man He receives the Holy Ghost, being Himself one God with the Father from whom the Holy Ghost proceeds.

The power of the Son of God was hidden from sight until His Ascension was thus complete, His manhood was manifesting fresh and fresh powers of the indwelling Spirit, but as receiving, not as communicating them. When He was seated at the Right Hand of God there was no longer aught to receive. He is seen as the Son of God, from whom the Holy Ghost proceeds. Henceforth He gives.

By this was His Sonship manifest. The Holy Ghost no longer descending upon His Humanity as having any emptiness, His Humanity was the perfect organ of Divine action. He acts in our manhood with supreme authority by the Holy Ghost proceeding from Himself as from the Father. His Humanity is taken up into the glory of the Sonship, which is called mystically the Right Hand of God, for it now becomes the sole instrument through which the Spirit

of God works. The Spirit proceeding from the Son does not act save according to the energy of this glorious Body. This Body is the Sword of the Spirit, the temple wherein God dwells.

‘He received gifts for men.’ The Body of Christ was not glorified in order to remain as an isolated Being. His Body was to make its force felt throughout creation. The second Adam is a life-giving Spirit. Henceforth the Church as the Body of Christ shares in the glorified energy of the Body in which He personally acted and now lives on high.

The Apostles had been brought into connection with this Body by feeding upon it at the last Supper, and by receiving the Spirit breathed forth from it on Easter-day.

When therefore Christ’s Body was completely glorified there could be no delay. The upheaving power at the extremity of a lever acts coincidently with the motion of the central wheel of the machine. That central power is here the power of God. Divine actions are instantaneous. Christ’s Body in the Apostles was in no way separable from Itself as taken up into God. The glorification of Christ above the angel host was manifested by the outpouring of the Holy Ghost upon His Body which still dwelt in the persons of the Apostles.

Scientific experiments show us how there are subtle powers mysteriously generated, which when complete burst out with an energy filling the whole organism wherein before they were latent. So may we reverently image forth the sudden flash of glory whereby the whole Body of Christ felt itself



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kindled with the Divine perfection, 'He being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear' (Acts ii. 38).

He received. He gave. The action was identical. God gave not the Spirit by measure unto Him (John iii. 34) and of His fulness have all we received.

Of this Spirit we are made partakers by union with the Body of Christ. 'By one Spirit we are all baptised into one body, and are all made to drink into one Spirit.'

Christ is the Head. We are the members. All that is His is ours. But our flesh in its dulness must be subjected to His Flesh in its spiritual glory. The Flesh of Christ is a real created substance, but not a dull material lump. It is a self-communicative force. Our dulness must be moved thereby. It moves us not merely by the thrust of material contact. That would be our destruction, for our bodies could not bear such motion. To do His work is more than human strength permits. By the created fellowship of Body with body, He communicates to us the laws of conduct which constitute His own perfect righteousness and holiness. By the regenerating power of the Holy Ghost He strengthens us as by a Fire which transforms and deifies, so that we may live with the life of God and do the work of God.

The subtle powers of nature defy space. How much more does the Body of Christ! The force of His holy Heart reproduces itself within every one of

His members. We have but to yield ourselves up to it. God exalting Him to His Right Hand hath given Him to be Head over all things to the Church, which is His Body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all.

O Jesu, grant that I may ever be true to Thy glorious Body. So shall I die to every other thought and live to God.

My son, I call thee out of the world that thou mayest live wholly to Me. Look to Me. Lean on Me. Abide in Me. Let Me be thine All, thy Life, thy Strength, thy Joy, thy Light, thy Law, thy Food, thy Spiritual Wealth, thine eternal Portion. Seek Me as being all-sufficing, and seek nothing but in Me, by Me, for Me. So shall the fulness of My grace raise thee out of thy weakness, and thy soul shall have her hunger sated in the fulness of My Righteousness wherein thou shalt be exalted for ever.

O Jesu, I feel Thy touch. I hear Thy voice. I see Thy brightness. I rejoice in Thy Spirit. Wonderful is the life derived from Thee and hidden with Thee still at God's Right Hand. O let Thy life overpower every movement of my natural being. As Thou art ascended to the Right Hand of God, let Thy loving Spirit lead me forth, revealing to me Thy beauty, that I may search into the mysteries of Thy dwelling.

MEDITATION LV.

**The Faithful dwelling with Christ in
Glory.**

Stephen, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, and said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God.—
Acts vii. 55-56.

1. IDENTITY CONTINUOUS.

IN our Meditations upon the Ascension we have been considering what ideas of Ascension are naturally suggested by the dogmatic truths respecting our Lord's Divine Person and His two natures, as the Church teaches them. The course of nature furnishes illustrations of the relationship between the several powers which are involved, although nothing in nature can give us any real conception of the power by which our Lord was glorified, the power which He now exerts in His glory.

We are, it is feared, too apt to think of our Lord's human nature as remaining the same in its constitution, although surrounded with an atmosphere of glory which is not really akin to it, whereas it is the constitution of our Lord's Humanity which is changed, although its essence remains the same. The atmosphere of glory which surrounds Him is but the manifestation of what He ever was interiorly in Himself.

Our Lord's Humanity, freed from the density

belonging to this lower, fallen world, acts thus spiritually, according to the spiritual energy proper to man's pure and perfect life. This vitality, strengthened by the hypostatic union, becomes the adequate exponent of the Divine Presence dwelling within Him, adequate not to the infinite interior self-knowledge of the Trinity, but to that exterior self-manifestation whereby God purposes that the universe should become the index of powers inherent in Himself.

We know various forms of power in this world—mechanical, chemical, electrical, moral, vital, and so forth. If we could know what man would be in his proper vitality, we should probably find how all these were summed up in man. The suasive force of the human will would be recognised as a regulative permanent law of life. The perfected morality of habitual action would be seen as a real power, glorifying our personal nature. Mysteries of our nature which are only known by us in strange spiritualistic phenomena, so as to defy our control, would doubtless be seen in a normal state of activity. What we know even in this world as strength of character would be manifest in its true sovereignty, merited, and therefore perfected, by obedience. Physical, mental, and moral power would be seen in combined operation.

If such might be looked for in the case of an ordinary man freed from this burdensome existence of sin and death, how much more stupendous must be the manifestation of the Son of man, even in His manhood alone. How glorious this Being as He must be seen shining forth with the glory of God.

As we behold Him perfectly glorified we must

remember that the same change shall happen to ourselves by a law operating as truly in us as in Him. We carry about with us a form which shall pass onward to new life. We must be careful that it is not marred. It is being developed here for what it shall be there.

We know not how far the risen life is limited by what we know as form. Spiritual forms are not less real than natural forms, although we cannot see them with the outward eye. In an advanced state of being we shall see with a spiritual eye. The manifestations of such life are doubtless as much beyond what we understand by sight as the power of sight is beyond the power of touch. In the Apocalypse Christ appears under various forms, as the Son of man, as the Lion, as the Lamb. While we must be careful not to think of our Lord as having laid aside anything that is proper to the essence of humanity, we must remember that we know humanity under conditions as unlike its real self as the wintry stem is unlike the tree in summer's glory, or the sheet of ice unlike the flowing stream, or the caterpillar unlike the moth. Even though the bodily organs remain for use, yet how different, even in this world, is the form of age from that of infancy. Personal identity remains, but the outward eye could not recognise it.

Whatever change awaits each rising form we must remember that nothing is arbitrary. 'God gives to every seed his own body' (1 Cor. xv. 38). The physical law of our nature as developed by habits of action in this present life will remain as the individual self. As each step of our development in this

world is dependent upon the perfection of the stage preceding it, so will the development of the risen life depend upon our true development in this our preparatory condition. The resurrection will be according to a physical law of continuity just as much as the emerging of the chicken from its egg. Whatever external features of reward or punishment may be awaiting us, we must receive in the body the things done in the body, whether they be good or bad (2 Cor. v. 10). By each action the whole nature of the individual has been assuming a form from which it cannot be arbitrarily exempted by any act of Divine pardon. Our acts abide for ever. Here in this world by the laws of nature and grace we are making ourselves. Our judgment will be the manifestation of our conduct as abiding in the habits which we have formed, habits of goodness and power, or of incapacity and sin. The environments which often in this world served as substitutes for intrinsic power will avail no more; accidental genius, or wealth, or such-like things. The moral self will remain whether perfected or paralysed. Our habits cannot change.

The grace of Christ's Body, as He is the only living Man, is the only life-giving power by which our nature can be raised then to true life. 'In Him is Life, and the Life is the Light of men.' The second Adam is a life-giving Spirit. No natural powers can rise to the supernatural life without the sustaining energy of this Divine remedy. This does not destroy—rather it demonstrates—the reality of present moral laws. The life of grace is given, but the laws of natural development remain. How

should the contemplation of the all-perfect glory of the risen Saviour make us watchful so to live that we may have part along with Him.

O Jesu, as Thou art ascended to the throne of Thy glory, Thou callest me to watchful obedience that I fail not of the benefit which Thou hast provided for me.

My son, amidst the difficulties of life thou must look to Me. So shalt thou be cheered to take up thy cross that thou mayest receive in thy body the reward of My grace. Look to Me, and I will show thee thyself as thou shalt be. O My people, in love has My law been given unto you; walk in love.

2. LIFE HIDDEN WITH CHRIST IN GOD.

The glorification of our Lord Jesus is not only the pattern to which we must look in order to think rightly of our own future glory. It is the source of all glory to us. Sin would make a glorious resurrection impossible for any man by nature. The death of the body does not satisfy the claim of sin nor stay its consequences. Resurrection without Christ will only show the totality of the dominion which sin has possessed over every man. We look forward to a glorious resurrection only as being the members of Christ. He, communicating to us His life by grace, enables the faithful to attain through death to glory. We are not saved merely by an appeal to mercy for the merits of Jesus, but by the power of His life

given to us as being incorporated with His living Body. 'If when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by [through] the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, shall we be saved by [in] His life' (Rom. v. 10). The merits of Christ as dying are the reason of our reconciliation. Union with Christ ever living is the essence of our salvation—salvation which is a state, not of final assurance, but of individual responsibility and power.

We cannot use our privileges in Christ aright if we do not constantly bear in mind the glory wherein He dwells. The forgetfulness of this seems to be the great weakness of modern Christianity. People look to Christ upon the Cross in such a way as to forget their union with Christ upon the Throne of Glory. Faith cannot be a true and living faith unless it be faith in a living Saviour truly capable of strengthening us amidst the infirmities of earth for the accomplishment of the work of God.

This exaltation of Christ to the Right Hand of power is a truth containing for us the most important consequences. Our religion will be entirely different according as it has for its central point Calvary or the Throne of God. The Throne of God must be for us an abiding reality, so that we are always to be living in immediate connection therewith.

The sacraments are the means by which Christ communicates this power from Himself as the Head to us the members, and the connection thus established is a permanent connection. It is by feeding upon Christ in the holy Eucharist that we have this connection from time to time renewed. Christ in

order to give us His Body does not come down to earth by personal action, for this would involve the humiliation, or emptying of Himself, which belonged to the Incarnation at the first, but He gives to us His Body, extending Himself by the power of the Holy Ghost. The procession of the Holy Ghost is the distinctive glory of the Son of God in union with the Father, and the Body and Blood of Christ thus given by the power of the Holy Ghost from the Son of God at the Right Hand of the Father convey the glory of the Sonship, whereas if they were given to us by any motion of the Son of God, quitting as it were the eternal Throne, the glorious action of the anointing Spirit would be external to it. Truly in every humiliation of the Son of God the Holy Ghost would be consubstantially present with Him, but it is only while His Person acts in the co-equal glory of the Eternal Sonship that the glory of the proceeding Spirit can be found within the act. The Holy Ghost cannot come forth to us save from Jesus glorified, nor can Jesus be glorified truly save as seated on the Right Hand of the Father.

Divine then is the union effected between us and Christ in the holy Eucharist. He does not come near to us by local transition, as if in one spot of space He would be nearer to us than in any other, but He comes in the power of the Holy Ghost, and by the extension of His Body lifts up those that feed upon Him that they may dwell with Him in the unity of the Divine life.

We have then to think of Christ's Body on the Right Hand of God as a real centre of power for the

transformation of our lives. The Spirit of God dwelling in Him operates through Him upon all the members of His Body. As the heart is the central organ of physical life, so the Body of Christ is the central organ of spiritual life to His Church.

This life not being of the lower nature is not manifest to the lower senses. We do not feel its operation by any necessary law. We need to cherish it by faith. The more we live in the exercise of faith and the practice of meditation, the more will this life be recognised as a reality. Its existence is independent of ourselves, but it does not become practically efficacious for our sanctification save through faith which worketh by love (Gal. v. 6). Upon this it is that St. Paul dwells so constantly, and when he speaks of faith it is this living faith in a living Saviour that he means, a life hid with Christ in God. This faith is the substance of things hoped for (Heb. xi. 1).

We 'can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth us' if we are really laying hold upon this glorious presence of Christ. Any defect of power arises from defect in our grasp of this power. The power of the glorified Saviour is abundantly sufficient if we only lay hold upon it rightly.

Our reception of the holy Eucharist will be very different if we regard that holy ordinance as a memorial of something done long ago, or as the appointed means of bringing a Saviour down to us to visit and console us, or as the true and natural means whereby we are lifted up to *Him* so that we

may go forth replenished with the abundance of power, sharing ourselves in His Divine life.

‘Lift up your hearts.’ This is our true attitude. We have to follow our ascended Lord to the throne of glory, that with angels and archangels and all the company of heaven we may praise His glorious Name. Thither we must rise, not seeking to bring Christ down again from above, but acknowledging His presence with an efficacy above all limitations of space. The consecrated elements shine, but not with the glow of a heavenly light resting upon them from a lofty throne in heaven. They shine because His glorified substance shines through them. ‘The way into the holiest is opened for us by the Blood of Jesus.’ We see by faith how His Body taking those earthly things, as when He fed on the broiled fish, absorbs them into itself, and makes its glorious power to stream forth through that which it assumes, and gathers us as we feed thereon into its own supernatural majesty. ‘Our sinful bodies are thus to be made clean by His Body, and our souls washed through His most precious Blood, and we are evermore to dwell in Him and He in us.’

O Jesu, do thou enlighten mine eyes that I may contemplate the glory of Thy heavenly presence. Quicken my senses that by faith I may always experience Thy powerful operation. So make me to grow in grace and in the knowledge of Thee, my Saviour. Hide me in the wounds of Thy Passion. Hide me so that I may behold the brightness of Thy glory. I

would not see Thee now as Moses saw Thee when Thou hadst passed by. Nay, I would see Thee with the inner vision, as none can see Thee save those whom Thou hast taken into Thine ownself.

Look thou unto Me, My son. Nothing shall be hidden from thee. Marvel not if thou dost not see Me as thou desirest. Cherish this desire and persevere in thy contemplation. Soon thou shalt see, and the sight of Me shall be a power within thee enabling thee to triumph over all antagonism.

O Jesu, my Lord, in the sight of Thee I would desire to be transformed, and the sight of Thee shall be my joy eternally. None can see Thee but they who are one with Thee. None can be one with Thee save they who live by seeing Thee. Purge away the blindness of my nature which fails of seeing Thee. Lift me up into Thyself, that I may lose sight of all that is not Thee.

3. THE VISION OF ST. STEPHEN.

The great virtue of Christian faith is taught us in the vision of the first martyr. The life hidden with Christ in God made him insensible as it were to outward things.

This vision was a result of the indwelling Spirit illuminating him in his discourse. Stephen was 'a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost' (Acts vi. 5). 'To see the heavens opened and the Son of man standing at the Right Hand of God' (Acts vii. 50) was the very law of this life. This now was reach-

ing its climax. By this he fought and won the crown of martyrdom. The wisdom by which he spake was the outcome of a habit of life abiding in the fellowship of the heavenly Wisdom. He was a martyr not to a dead Saviour but to a living one; not to a Saviour absent or unseen, but near to his inmost consciousness by the power of the Holy Ghost. The death of Jesus was a fact which all knew well. The glory of Jesus was a living power in which He shared, and by which he felt himself to be separated from all the multitude around who had no eyes to see this heavenly vision.

So must we ever be looking to Jesus at the Right Hand of God, that in Him we may have that life and strength which belongs to Him alone. We live in Him with His life. Were He to forsake that throne of power and come near to us, submitting to lower ways of earthly approach, we should lose that power which is our glory. We could not have it here were He not there. His presence with us in power and glory depends upon His absence from the limitations of natural feebleness. It was expedient for us that He went away. So then, having entered into His glory, He bids us live with Him there.

Alas! how little does this glory affect us. We desire gifts from Christ rather than Christ Himself; but we must give ourselves to Christ, feed upon Christ, find our satisfaction in Christ, be hidden in Christ. So shall we see Him in His truth. 'Our conversation is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Lord Jesus Christ.' To see Jesus in heaven implies a perfect union with Him in that heavenly life.

Such vision is the sight of sympathy. We behold Him rejoicing in the glory of the Father and rejoice with Him. We see Him by His very intercession breathing forth gifts of grace for the benefit of His people, and we rejoice therein. We read in His countenance the interest which He takes in our individual perfection, and that becomes a new motive of action, so that we are led to do the works of holiness purely that He may be glorified. We know our security in His love, and lose all fear of earthly ills. We see Him living altogether apart from the triumphs of the world, and the desire of worldly advancement for His Church dies out. We see Him welcoming His dying saints, and thenceforward death becomes our delight.

All this is implied in seeing Jesus at the Right Hand of God. We cannot see Him unless we are dead to all things here, as He is, and alive to the joy of Divine love, as living with Him. This must change the whole aspect of our lives. The multitude saw the face of Stephen as it had been the face of an angel (Acts vi. 15), because this vision filled his heart. The world ought to know by the heavenly lustre of our lives that God is in us of a truth (1 Cor. xiv. 25). When Moses came down from the mountain his face shone with the glory of God. Our lives must shine because we are taken up to dwell in that glory, and it is our life, a glory not passing away.

O Lord Jesu, let the vision of Thy glory strengthen me, even as of old it strengthened thine holy martyr Stephen.

My son, truly I change not. Multitudes have found My glory to be their strength. Make trial thereof and it shall not fail thee.

O Lord, I ask not to be set free from my weakness, if only in my weakness I may know the greatness of Thy power.

Only by weakness canst thou learn My power. Henceforth shall thou know My power, when thy weakness shall have passed away.

O Lord Jesu, though I have to wait awhile, let the light of Thy countenance shine out upon my heart. Let Thy light shine upon me, and I shall be strong to meet all adversity. Truly Thy people are not of the world, even as Thou art not of the world. My home is where no worldly eye can see, no worldly weapon reach to do me harm. Hide me evermore under the shadow of Thy wings. Hide me within the sanctuary of Thy glory. There to live is indeed a true and glorious life. To those who are hidden there Thou givest the sweet manifestation of Thine everlasting Love.

MEDITATION LVI.

The Glorified Jesus dwelling in His Saints.

And as he journeyed, it came to pass that he drew nigh unto Damascus; and suddenly there shone round about him a light out of heaven: and he fell upon the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: but rise, and enter into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do. And the men that journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing the voice, but beholding no man.—Acts ix. 3-7.

And it came to pass, that, as I made my journey, and drew nigh unto Damascus, about noon, suddenly there shone from heaven a great light round about me. And I fell unto the ground, and heard a voice saying unto me, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And I answered, Who art thou, Lord? And he said unto me, I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest. And they that were with me beheld indeed the light, but they heard not the voice of him that spake to me. And I said, What shall I do, Lord? And the Lord said unto me, Arise, and go into Damascus; and there it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do.—Acts xxii. 6-10.

Whereupon as I journeyed to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests, at midday, O king, I saw on the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them that journeyed with me. And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice saying unto me in the Hebrew language, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? It is hard for thee to kick against the goad. And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. But arise, and stand upon thy feet: for to this end have I appeared unto thee, to appoint thee a minister and a witness both of the things wherein thou hast seen me, and of the things wherein I will appear unto thee; delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom I send thee, to open their eyes, that they may turn from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive remission of sins and an inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith in me.—Acts xxvi. 12-18.

1. JESUS FIGHTING FOR HIS PEOPLE AS HIS MEMBERS.

THE vision of St. Stephen shows us how the faithful dwell in Christ. Their life, their active interests, are identified with Him in His glory. Contemplating

Him with perfect sympathy, they are transported from the conditions of earthly sorrow to the joy of His heavenly triumph.

The appearance of our Lord Jesus Christ to Saul teaches us the converse truth of Christ's union with His people in their earthly estate. 'The Christ' is the designation of the whole family of God. The Church is His Body, bears His Name (Jer. xxiii. 6 ; xxxiii. 16). So He reveals Himself to Saul. 'I am Jesus whom thou persecutest.' He, as the Head of the Body, does in some mysterious manner actually feel the antagonism of the powers of darkness by which His Church is assailed. He fights against those powers not by the immediate action of Divine Omnipotence but by grace in His elect.

We are too apt to think of Christ and the Church as if they were separate existences, to be united hereafter. It is not so. The Bride of Christ is taken out of the very substance of Christ, as Eve out of the side of Adam. His substance admits not of any separation. He is sensitive to all that happens in His Church, as 'His own Flesh' (Eph. v. 29).

Failing to recognise this makes us fearful for the Church, when earthly organisations fail to fulfil what we regard as necessary for her security. It deprives us individually of strength to meet our own difficulties. It blinds us to that reality of interest which Jesus at the Right Hand of God still takes in us His people. That interest is of no merely philanthropic or patronising kind. It is an interest really identifying us with Himself. He is personally thwarted in everything that retards our victory. We must not

think of Him as of one perfectly glorified, waiting till those He loves have come to Him out of their troubles in a distant sphere. He will not be perfectly glorified until He has communicated His glory to every member of His Body. He is 'expecting until His enemies be made His footstool' (Heb. x. 18). The marriage supper of the Lamb which shall be hereafter will be the consummation of a joy progressing throughout the period that intervenes.

God the Father is thus subduing all to Jesus, and this He does by the Person of the Holy Ghost. The gift of the Pentecostal Spirit proceeding from the Father is the power by which this victory is wrought. As Jesus is seated at the Right Hand of God, the Holy Ghost is the Light of His Countenance, shining forth through His glorified humanity and drawing all men unto Him.

That power of the Holy Ghost is working through His Body. It is hidden beneath the veil of our nature. Alas! it is sacrilegiously shrouded by our sins. Our sins hinder the world from recognising the Divine Presence which we bear. Nevertheless we have two natures, the nature of the old man and the nature of the new, even of 'the Lord from Heaven.' We, therefore, the same set of persons in the world, can be described either by our own sinfulness, the condition of the Church which meets the eye, or by His holiness, the inward vital organism of the Church. Truly He who bore the sins of the whole world upon the tree has still need to cleanse the heavenly sanctuary itself 'with better sacrifices' than belonged to the Jewish temple. He is continually doing so by the

sprinkling of His own most precious Blood, until His Church shall be found 'without spot or wrinkle or any such thing' (Eph. v. 27).

Christ is thus within us carrying on a war against evil as the Head of the Church. Personally acting from the throne of God as the centre of all power, He by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven (1 Peter i. 12) is making His power to be felt upon the earth.

It was hard for Saul to kick against the pricks of this Divine power. Saul had entered into war against no earthly foe. Saul was 'fighting against God' (Acts v. 39).

Our Lord was pleased to make Himself manifest to Saul in His own personal glory. The light which shone upon Him from heaven was the same as the unseen power which he was so madly resisting upon earth. It was the Holy Ghost which revealed Christ. They who were with him saw not Jesus, neither did they hear His words, for the Holy Ghost did not open their senses to receive this communication. No demonstration of Divine glory can awaken the intelligence of man, unless there be an operation of the Holy Ghost subduing the heart.

Christ through ages ever since has been seated at the Right Hand of God, and the Holy Ghost shining forth from His countenance, but men see Him not. They are absorbed in what the natural sense can perceive. Even when they have right perception of what the Church of Christ was meant to be, they fail too often of perceiving her real Divine life, and because it is not manifest in ways of nature they fall

under disappointment and perish in unbelief. It should not be so. Christ who by a miraculous manifestation of Himself called Saul into the fold, is continually showing His glory to those who will hold to Him according to the terms of His covenant. We must be 'walking in the Light of the Lord' (Is. ii. 5), 'walking as children of the Light' (Eph. v. 8), otherwise we shall have that light as our destruction which ought to be our salvation. His enemies must be made His footstool to be trampled under foot unless they are quickened by that Light which fills the living sanctuary of His Body.

Yea, that Light is carrying on its warfare even within our own selves. 'The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh' (Gal. v. 17). By the power of this Spirit we must do battle against external force and against the flesh. 'If ye by the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body ye shall live' (Rom. viii. 13). We must, however, feel the Personal association of Christ the Head of the Body working with us by the Personal indwelling of the Holy Ghost. It is only whilst thus 'holding the Head' (Col. ii. 19) that we can rise to the holiness which is required.

Surely we should be much more stimulated to take part in the victory of faith if we felt how Jesus our Lord is waiting until we have conquered. Surely we should be bold for enterprises worthy of this warfare if we felt that He is truly desiring the victory of His Church, and that He personally feels the thwarting occasioned by our sluggishness and unbelief.

Nothing ought really to be a grief to us if we are living in the joy of the victory of Jesus, save that which holds Him back from triumph. By the vision of Stephen rapt into the joy of Jesus we learn to turn Saul's vision to our profit, that by His power we may struggle against all that opposes Him. As the head is the seat of all sensation, so that the pains which seem to be in the members are really experienced not in those members but in the head, even so Christ is the seat of all sensation to His Church. We seem to suffer in the struggle with sin, but it is really He who is still suffering in us. The true suffering is not the pain of the sinful body which requires at any cost to be put away. The true suffering is the 'grieving of the Spirit' of Christ within us (Eph. iv. 30), who cannot make us manifest in His freedom because we will not act in His truth.

Yet the Spirit of God is not ceasing to act. We need to take the sword of the Spirit which is the word of God (Eph. vi. 17). By the power of the Incarnate Word we can triumph. No other power can subdue mankind.

Jesu, my Lord, Thou art ever ready to use me in Thy warfare. Grant that I may give myself up to Thee.

My son, leave thyself in My hands. Look up to Me and I will use thee for My glory.

O my Jesu, why do I fear as if Thou wouldst forget me?

My son, as the arrow avails not unless it be directed by the hand of one that shall cause it

to fly, so thou canst do nothing unless I give it thee to do. I will use those who trust in Me as the instruments of My warfare, and I will give them strength against which no power of man or Satan can prevail.

O Jesu, the victory is Thine. Fight therefore by the hand of whomsoever Thou wilt. I desire not to have the glory of the conflict, but I will praise Thee because the victory is Thine.

2. JESUS SUFFERING IN HIS PEOPLE.

Jesus is fighting for His people by the vital energy of His own personal interest in them as His members. By this personal interference, He suffers within them. The pains of Calvary are ended, but we are His Body and He feels everything that affects our eternal welfare. O that we thought more of that grieving of the Spirit of Christ which our sins occasion! Christ can no longer suffer pain as belonging to the earth, but He has a warfare to accomplish, and 'how is He straitened until it be accomplished!' (Luke xii. 50).

He does not suffer in His people as if He felt their bodily pain to be marring His joy. He rejoices in their suffering, and right dear is their death in His sight (Ps. cxvi. 15). That suffering belongs to them not as being His members, but as being separate from Him by sin. Yea, by that suffering they die to sin and are brought into the joy of His renewing life. Jesus suffers because we are so unwilling to suffer, for this makes it impossible for Him

to give us the proper experience of the joys which are at His right hand for evermore. Jesus suffers in His persecuted saints most joyously, for they, realising by this suffering their hidden life with Christ in God, rejoice to suffer. They rejoice in tribulation because they rejoice in God (Rom. v. 8, 11) and they 'rejoice that they are counted worthy to suffer shame for His name' (Acts v. 41). Suffering is sweet to them, for the suffering which destroys the outer nature makes the inner man gloriously manifest. It is because we dwell so little on this thought that we measure Christ's success by outward triumphs, and have so little experience of heavenly delight.

He suffers in us. We reign in Him.

O Jesu, I refuse not any suffering, for I know that Thou canst make all glory to abound therein to those who love Thee.

Yea, My son, if they love Me truly they shall find that their sufferings make them experience the true joy of My triumphant life. O foolish are they who will think of their own sufferings and forget My joy which I would give them.

O Blessed Jesu, would that I had faith to lay hold upon Thy heavenly powers as one truly dead to the world.

O My son, why wilt thou suffer in thine own weakness? Surely thy suffering shall be of no avail. I have suffered for thee; I am suffering in thee. While thou holdest thyself back from Me I have to suffer from thee, for thou makest

all ~~My~~ suffering to be of no avail. ~~Rejoice in Me~~; so shall all the pain of ~~thy~~ suffering be relieved by the abundance of joy which ~~My~~ grace imparts.

O Jesu, give me such faith that I may claim my true portion, and find in every suffering the sweetness of Thy touch transforming it to joy. Once didst Thou suffer in Thine own Person, bearing the bitterness of our sin, but now dost Thou suffer in us Thy members, making all the glory of Thy grace to be manifest in the fulness of Thy Divine peace which Thy suffering servants alone can know.

8. JESUS ACTING THROUGH HIS PEOPLE AS HIS MEMBERS.

‘Go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do’ (Acts ix. 6).

Though Jesus by a special revelation would subdue the heart of Saul, yet He would not allow any Divine action of His own person to supersede the work of the Spirit personally acting through His Church for the teaching of the truth. Saul must come like any other convert to be baptised into the Body, and to drink into the Spirit (1 Cor. xii. 13). He must receive the teaching of the faith at the hands of those to whom God had entrusted this ministry.

So in all ages will it be. Jesus does not raise up fresh ministers with fresh revelations at various ages. He has given apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers for the perfecting of the saints, for the

work of the ministry, for the edifying of His Body until the end of time (Eph. iv. 11-13). 'Lo! I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world' (Matt. xxviii. 20).

We are not to look for any revelations outside of the Body of Christ. Saul, who was to receive wonderful revelations concerning the mysteries of the faith, must nevertheless receive the rule of faith from the lips of one of whom we know nothing save that he was called to be the minister by whom this astonishing reconciliation of the great Apostle was wrought.

The Church at large knew not what was being done. Jesus was personally ordering these events by the power of the Holy Ghost.

To us it seems as if there were some organising power wanting to the Church. We do not see the Head by whose wisdom all the members are moved. Even the feeble action of the paralysed limb comes from the Head, although its shaking mars the guidance. So Jesus is acting, and sometimes even through minds which are as it were shaking with spiritual paralysis. Nevertheless He can use them, He can give health and strength to them in due time. Though we see not the Head we are not to doubt His activity. We may not attempt to substitute one of the shoulders in place of the Head and look to it for guidance. We, each one of us in our own place in the Body of Christ, must rejoice in the knowledge of the guidance which never can fail. Jesus is acting in His Church in ways of which we are very little aware. He can use for His purposes those members

of which we take little account. But whatever He does He does for the edifying of His Body. He will renovate what is decayed, but He will never substitute anything new for that which was old. He will not suffer any individual to take the Headship of His Church. He can speak as He wills by His Holy Spirit. He strives, suffers, speaks through any one of His members, but all must be done according to the truth of His original decree, to perfect in us throughout all time that new Covenant of Love which He has established for ever.

Well may men fear because of those things which are coming upon the earth, but we have received a kingdom which cannot be moved. He reigns over all for ever and ever. At any moment He is ready to interfere for our deliverance.

O Jesu, let me always listen for Thy voice speaking in Thy Church, not that I may learn new things which Thou hast not revealed, but that I may act in the power of that truth which none can know unless they hear it according to the utterance of Thy Holy Spirit.

Many are they, My son, who hear the truth which My Church speaketh, but it profits them not because they hear not the voice of My Spirit.

O Lord, when I hear, let me hear Thee speaking, and when I speak let me be watchful for Thy Spirit to be speaking within me. So shall all be done to edification.

Yea, My son, no wisdom of words, however great, can take the place of the substance and

power which My Anointing Spirit gives to that which My members speak. Those in whom I speak shall be the never-failing instruments of My power. O My son, speak not to thy pleasure words which profit not. That which I bid thee must thou speak, and die unto all thought of thyself, that the words which thou speakest may be not thine but Mine.

O Lord Jesu, speak, for Thy servant heareth. Speak Thou by me, that Thy people may hear and live.

MEDITATION LVII.

**Jesus in Glory gathering His People
round Him.**

And I turned to see the voice which spake with me. And having turned I saw seven golden candlesticks; and in the midst of the candlesticks one like unto a son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about at the breasts with a golden girdle. And his head and his hair were white as white wool, white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; and his feet like unto burnished brass, as if it had been refined in a furnace; and his voice as the voice of many waters. And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth proceeded a sharp two-edged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.—
Rev. i. 12-16.

1. THE DIVINE GLORY.

THE two preceding visions have exhibited to us the mutual relationship between Christ and His people. Their life is hidden with Him in God; He Himself is their life, suffering still in them upon the earth. The vision of St. John exhibits the idea of relationship in the activity of a life derived from Christ and remaining indissoluble. To this we now proceed.

The vision is the vision of a Voice. The seer heard a voice and turned to see it. There had been one before who described himself as the voice crying in the wilderness. St. John's first teacher was a voice of earth. The form to which now he turns is the voice of Him that speaketh from heaven (Heb. xii. 25). It is the voice which shaketh not the earth only but also heaven. The earth and the heaven flee from His face, and place is not found for them (Rev. xx. 11). This voice is the voice of the

Lord God, from which the sinner fled when he heard it amidst the trees of the garden (Gen. iii. 8), but it calls the faithful near that they may leave the earth and its delights and dwell with Him, for 'in His temple doth every man speak of His honour' (Ps. xxix. 9). The voice of the beloved Lord has a hidden call. The eye of man could not behold Him. The Shulamite asks where her Beloved feeds (Cant. i. 7). She finds Him not. The voice spake from behind. It is the voice of eternal predestination. We must turn to see it. Then we see God revealed in the similitude of the Son of man. The Incarnation shall accomplish the fulness of the predestination. Look back, and still the Son of God cannot be known except in union with His Church. The love which binds them together is a love from everlasting. The lamp-bowls of the seven candlesticks are the lilies, in the midst of which the Beloved leads His flock to feed (Cant. ii. 16). The milky pasturage of earth shines with the fiery lustre of God.

That which is from eternity is now at length manifest in time. The vision of the Apocalypse is 'the revelation of Jesus Christ' (Rev. i. 1), for the Church in her deepest degradation does not cease to be His Body. Although she be living for the flesh, nevertheless it is His life whereby she lives. The union between Christ and His Church does not wait for the final marriage supper, for the Church has her beginning from Him, and her substance cannot be separated from His. She is one with Him by eternity of predestination, by origin of substance, by permanence of life.

‘The head of the woman is the man, and the Head of Christ is God’ (1 Cor. xi. 3). ‘His head and His hairs were white as wool, as white as snow.’ The hair of His head expresses the abundance of Divine sanctity wherewith the renewed race of man is crowned. ‘Though thy sins be as scarlet they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson they shall be as wool’ (Is. i. 18). The hair of the penitent wiped the feet of Jesus. The Divine glory shines upon His head. He is seen wearing no diadem, for the diadem is a symbol of glory received from another. The glory of the Son of man is a glory naturally inherent and outwardly manifest as springing forth from Himself. No glory can be bound upon the head of Him whose radiant glory binds all heaven in living union with Himself. So the crown of which the Psalmist speaks is a crown of mystery growing out of the head of the Son of David, the Royal Priest, ‘Upon Himself shall His mitre sprout forth’ (Ps. cxxxii. 18).

The eyes of the Son of God are as a flame of fire. Their brightness makes that to be visible on which they gaze. They are the eyes of Divine Love, the glory of the Spirit of Wisdom, whereby He knows all things. The fire is the fire of the Divine Nature. The flame is the Holy Ghost, who proceeds from the second Person of the Godhead as the personal energy of that nature wherein He is consubstantia with the Father. In the fulness of the Father’s love He gazes from eternity upon the glory of the Covenant which shall be revealed in the last time.

O Jesu, Thou art our Head, and our life is wholly dependent upon Thee.

My son, trust in Me, that I may order all things for thee. I am thy Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification and Redemption.

Dear Lord, the glory which surrounds Thy head is a Divine brightness making manifest the life wherein Thy members are called to share.

O that ye would live in the fellowship of My glory. The whiteness of My head tells not of weakness or decay, but of the glory of the Eternal Wisdom. In the seven locks of My head thou shalt find the exuberance of the glorifying Spirit of Grace. Yea, the glory of God which decks the Head shall stream down and clothe My members. My Church shall be clothed thereby.

O Jesu, I look up to Thee in Thy glory, and in that glory Thou beholdest me clothed with Thine own majestic love. The hair of my head is purple in the fellowship of Thy passion (Cant. vii. 5), but it shines as gold in the glory of Thine exaltation.

My son, I have indeed given My passion to be to thee for a covering, but thou must claim it as thine own, suffering along with Me. Then shall it be transfigured as a Divine splendour over all thy form. Yea, thou shalt be clothed with the countless glories of God.

O Jesu, Thou art the head of gold, not as possessing earthly dominion, but by the glorious life of the eternal love. Therein Thou art glorified and Thy glory clothes Thy people.

2. THE SUFFERING HUMANITY.

This vision of the Incarnate God cannot be seen in this world truly save by those who suffer. John is our 'brother and companion in the tribulation, and the kingdom, and the patience of Jesus Christ' (Rev. i. 9). So does the seer describe himself. To lie upon the bosom of Jesus gives no pledge of outward repose, but of Divine grace amidst suffering. That bosom bore within itself all the troubles of the world, and we cannot lie in that bosom unless we share in that vast sorrow. The more we know of the sorrow the more may we know of the joy. Both must be truly shared, or our religious life will be but a dream. 'As ye are partakers of the sufferings, so also of the consolations' (2 Cor. i. 7). The one are as real as the other, and as present as the other. We are apt to think of consolation coming to us hereafter. But not so. Now it is the time for us to live in the consolation of the Holy Ghost.

The feet of the Son of man are His Church, wherein He walks upon the earth; twofold, perhaps we may say, as the Church is commonly represented as twofold because of the old and new covenants. They are like fine brass, burning as a furnace. The brass has been refined until it has the colour of gold. The earthly nature shines with the brightness of heaven. It is the fire of the Holy Spirit which gives this purity and lustre. They have been purified in the furnace of affliction.

The Church of God does not shine in heaven,

in the predestination of God, because the wealth of the world is her portion. Her portion is the inheritance of the Spirit, and her outward condition is the burning fiery furnace wherein the fellowship of the Son of God is known by her. These feet must ever be treading the way of sorrows while they are upon the earth, the King's Highway of the Holy Cross.

Christ does not assume a nature which was pure, but He assumes it in order that He may purify it. The fire of His Divine Life, the sanctifying Spirit, burns within the Church so as to purge off all its blackness. That purity which in Himself was perfect from the moment of the Incarnation because the Holy Spirit was not given by measure unto Him, is gradually extended amidst the discipline of outward suffering to all His members. As He learnt obedience by the things which He suffered (Heb. v. 8), so must they who were rebellious be brought to obedience by suffering. It is not an instantaneous transformation whereby we become perfected in the life of God through the grace of regeneration. The indwelling Spirit works out our purification gradually as we continue in the furnace.

We are not to long for outward wealth as if it would enable us to show forth God's glory. We must be purified by suffering, sanctified according to the operation of this indwelling Spirit. So shall it be seen that God is dwelling in us truly. The furnace is kindled by the Spirit of God for the punishment of sinners. They are unharmed in the midst of it who have the Spirit of God dwelling in themselves.

The things of earth round about them perish, but they, like the fine brass, shine out more and more. What is earthly in them is purged off. The imperishable substance of the new man shines out. The feet live with the life of the Head. The fire of Divine presence must consume all that belongs to the natural order of the present world. The feet living with the life of God are sustained and purified by the action of the Divine nature within them.

O my Jesu, let me alway acknowledge Thy presence strengthening me and perfecting me in all my ways upon the earth.

My son, I have trodden the thorns, and they who would have Me walk in them upon the earth must be content to meet all sorrows without relief, walking even barefoot and yet rejoicing because their feet are shod with that which surpasses all earthly consolation, even the preparation of the gospel of peace.

O Lord Jesu, make me to feel Thy presence. I know that those who are nearest to Thee suffer most, but they alone walk safely in the world.

Fear not to suffer. The furnace wherein thou must be purified shall destroy all that is not of Me, but the fire of My Divine Presence within thee shall make thee increasingly triumphant. That fire is as gold within thee. My feet are not as the feet of worldly power, part of iron and part of miry clay, but all the vileness of their earthly nature is burnt out of them, and all the merits of My Divine glory are communicated to

them by the fire of grace which their tribulations make to burn brightly.

O Lord Jesu, how can I refuse any suffering if thereby I can become sanctified, so as to be more worthy of Thee? Who am I that I should walk upon the earth bearing the burden of Thy Divine glory? O precious burden. Surely it is the very strength of those who bear it. Let me go no whither unless Thy presence go with me. Thus let me walk upon the earth. Thus let me go upon the lion and the adder, and tread down Satan according to the triumph of Thy grace. Thus let me attain to stand in the gates of Jerusalem. Thy foes shall be subdued beneath Thy feet. O subdue Thou me, that in the day of Thy victory I may have my share.

8. MINISTRATIONS OF POWER.

The figure of Jesus is seen in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks. They receive their light from Him. He rules them by personal interference. He has not merely lighted nor trimmed them. They shine from Him; His Life is their Light (St. John i. 4). Such light is not natural to man any more than the flame is natural to the bronze bowl which bears it. They burn with the oil of grace. They shine with the life-giving Breath that kindles it. The Church would be unable to fulfil her destiny if she had merely those qualities which belong to man in his natural order of creation. It is hers to manifest a supernatural life derived by the continuous agency of personal fellowship from Christ the Lord. There is no difference in the life wherewith He lives

and wherewith His Body lives. 'The Spirit of life in Christ Jesus' (Rom. viii. 2) is a Spirit of Divine sanctity wherewith we are called to act to the glory of God. Our sins are ours: our sanctity is His. We are not raised to God by a gradual improvement of nature, but by the gift of grace perfect in its beginning as in its close. Christ in us is the hope of glory. Personally He sustains His Body the Church in the fellowship of His Divine life. Many may fall away from their vocation, but He is unchangeable. She is secure against the triumph of the gates of hell because He is her Head, and His Spirit binds her in indissoluble life with Himself. 'God is in the midst of her, therefore shall she not be removed; God shall help her, and that right early' (Ps. xlvi. 5).

What is that garment wherewith the Son of man is clothed but His people? It is a vesture of life bound around His breast with the golden girdle of Divine Love. The unction of the Holy Ghost poured out upon the Head, running down upon the beard, overflows the very skirts of His clothing (Ps. cxxxiii. 2). This oil of gladness is the Deific glory making its power manifest in those whom Jesus assumes into union with Himself. The vesture which He bears is not that which can be taken from Him as when the soldiers parted His clothing amongst themselves. It is a vesture fragrant with the myrrh and aloes and cassia of His Passion. He does not assume this clothing to add to the glory of His appearing, but in order to manifest therein the glory which He has within Himself. The merits of His

Passion give it lustre, and beauty, and form, and colour, and fragrance, and imperishable life. It is a vesture full of personal joyousness, the manifold intelligences of His saints woven together in the united consciousness of the excellences of His person, to whom they cling. As the glass of the lamp shines with the light that is within, so do the saints shine as the vesture of Jesus.

The world asks the Church 'What is thy Beloved more than another beloved, O thou fairest among women?' (Cant. v. 9). Surely there is none other that hath life in Himself, or can give life from Himself but He alone. The humanity of Christ shines in every part with the loveliness of the Only-begotten, and His clothing lives with the virtue of His own life. It is His very self. Of old there was a virtue which faith could appropriate issuing from the hem of His garment. Now that He is clothed with majesty and glory the heavenly radiance transfigures His people with whom He has clothed Himself so as no fuller on earth can white them (Mark ix. 3), and they are not glistening for a few moments alone. Their brightness is for ever and ever. They are girt upon the breast of everlasting love, and drink the fullness of Divine wisdom, and live with the life of Him to whom they are bound.

His feet are still walking upon the earth, and round about Him are the golden lamps which shine with His glory.

He speaks, and His voice, the voice of the Incarnate Word, is as the sound of many waters. As the sound of a mighty cataract, so powerful, so tender,

so changeless, is the utterance of the Eternal Truth in the faith which has been once for all delivered to the saints to be promulgated amongst all nations. Into that faith we are baptised. It speaks within us, and will speak eternally. It is a voice supernatural, as the truth which it proclaims and the understanding whereby it is apprehended. The voice, the mind, of Christ fills the sanctuary of those living lamps. The voice of the multitudinous waters speaks through their sevenfold flame, the waters of regeneration and the flame of the illuminating Spirit.

He has in His right hand seven stars. These seven are one, as the seven spirits before the throne are but the manifestation in a sevenfold organism of the one undivided Spirit. By these stars we must understand some presiding influence whereby the Holy Spirit rules the Church, whether the instrumentality be human only or that of some superior ministration. The government and discipline of the Church is in the right hand of Christ. 'Thou shalt be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord' (Is. lxii. 8).

Out of His mouth proceedeth a sharp two-edged sword. It is the sword of the Spirit which comes forth from His Godhead, and is uttered by the way of temporal mission from the mouth of His assumed Humanity. This Spirit He breathed upon His Apostles on the first Easter-day. He has never ceased to breathe it since then. He breathes not by successive acts of respiration, but by the continuous forthstreaming of the Holy Ghost. He acts now in human form, like unto the Son of man, but with Divine

power, unvarying in its completeness and majesty, hidden from the eyes of men, not by reason of humiliation which obscures, but of Divine glory which transcends all human contemplation. The flame of fire is as the firm blade of a sword issuing from the mouth of Christ. By it He slays the wicked. The rod of His mouth is the Spirit of Righteousness wherewith He reproofs for the meek of the earth (Is. xi. 4). Would that we trusted in the power of this sword rather than in our own right hand to help us.

The ministry of the Spirit slays and quickens. All must be slain ere it can be raised in the newness of the life of the glorified Saviour. The ministry of the Spirit is 'a savour of death unto death' to some, while it is 'a savour of life unto life' for others (2 Cor. ii. 16). 'Tophet is ordained of old; the breath of the Lord like a stream of brimstone doth kindle it' (Is. xxx. 33). Yet is it this Breath which kindles the seven stars of the firmament of grace as they shine before the mediatorial throne of Jesus.

The sword is two-edged because of its double effect, to slay and to quicken. Literally it is 'two-mouthed.' The mouth of the sword speaks naturally of death. The mouth of the Divine sword not only puts before us life and death, as Moses did (Deut. xxx. 19), but accomplishes the doom upon those who refuse, and gives power to such as will accept the gift that they may become the children of God in newness of life.

The voice of Jesus speaks within His Church. The hand of Jesus rules within His Church. The breath of Jesus gives Life of Light within His Church.

The lamps shine as with stars. These stars are in the right hand of Christ. His breath makes them shine. His countenance, moreover, in the midst of them is as the sun shining in his strength. Our Melchisedec is the Sun of Righteousness. All righteousness emanates from Him.

As the planets depend upon the sun of their system, so the Church depends upon Christ. His person is the unifying principle to the Church. All is founded upon Him. But not merely as in the outward heavens. An unknown power determines the motion of the planets while the central orb preserves their unity. Here the Person of Christ is the centralising power of unity to the Church which else would be many instead of being one, but the right hand of Christ Himself is the ruling principle.

The seven lamps are thus living with the life of Him who stands in the midst of them and holds them. Doubtless the Evangelist would have us conceive of the seven lamps as being nourished with oil through sacramental ministrations as through the golden pipes of Zechariah's vision. As the throne in a subsequent vision, so here the candlesticks are filled with the life of Him that stands within them. We may perhaps regard the living lamps as symbolising the Church militant, in the midst of which the feet of Jesus are walking upon the earth, whereas the vested form in the midst shows us how Jesus has gathered His saints round about Himself in the glory of the life beyond the grave.

All nevertheless is full of life. The life of Christ's own Personality extends itself throughout

a corporate spiritual organisation of which He is the Head, the Light, the Glory. The candlestick may be removed out of his place for the sin of the people, but it is not destroyed because it is removed. It cannot be 'plucked out of the hand' of Christ, for 'He and the Father are one' (John x. 29). O sweet security! How we tremble for the future of the Church upon the earth! Rather ought we to long that she might be translated hence. Here Jesus is found as the life of the seven golden candlesticks. Better shall it be when we behold Him as the life of the heavenly Jerusalem, when the Holy City, the Lamb's wife, shall be seen descending from God perfected in the participation of His merits, and abiding in the manifest unity of His holy Love with all the glory of the Holy Spirit.

Now are we gathered into the spiritual life where-with the Body of Christ is glorified at the right hand of the Father, but we know not yet the fulness of glory which this life involves. Hereafter shall we know as we are known (1 Cor. xiii. 12), and in that knowledge find the joy of our Lord.

O Jesu, the Body of Thy glory is the home wherein I delight to dwell. What though I seek Thee and find Thee not! Yet Thou art near. I am blind, and my natural powers fail to apprehend the glory of Thy truth. By searching I cannot know Thee, but Thou revealest Thyself by Thy Holy Spirit to childlike hearts that wait upon Thee. Show me Thy glory, yea that interior glory which is within myself, the blessedness of eternal love which is the

inheritance of all Thy saints. Separate me from every earthly thought which can obscure this knowledge. So let me be dead unto the world that I may know what truly is Thy risen life, that I may live in Thee and Thou in me according to the blessed purpose of Thy gracious call.

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